VOL 17 No 5 MAY 1987

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Prepared for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office by Reference Services, Central Office of Information and published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London

*Annual subscriptions including postage and index £23·50*

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# GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

## General Election

**A general election is to be held in the United Kingdom on 11 June.**

The Prime Minister's Office announced on 11 May that the United Kingdom Parliament would be dissolved on 18 May and that polling in a general election would take place on 11 June.

The new Parliament will be summoned on 17 June to elect the Speaker and to swear in members. The State Opening will be on 25 June when the new Government's programme will be announced in the Queen's Speech.

### State of the Parties

The state of the parties in the House of Commons at the time of the announcement on 11 May was as follows.

| | |
|---|---|
| Conservative | 391 |
| Labour | 204 |
| Liberal | 19 |
| Social Democratic | 8 |
| Scottish National | 2 |
| Plaid Cymru (Welsh Nationalist) | 2 |
| Ulster Unionist (Northern Ireland) | 10 |
| Democratic Unionist (Northern Ireland) | 3 |
| Ulster Popular Unionist (Northern Ireland) | 1 |
| Social Democratic and Labour (Northern Ireland) | 2 |
| Sinn Fein (Northern Ireland) | 1 |
| Independent | 1 |
| Vacant seats (Kirkcaldy, Deptford) | 2 |
| TOTAL | 646 |

The four remaining seats, out of the total of 650, were held by the Speaker of the House of Commons and his three deputies (the Chairman of Ways and Means and the first and second Deputy Chairmen of Ways and Means), who do not vote except in their official capacity in the event of a tie. The Government majority over all other parties was 138 although the Sinn Fein MP did not take his seat.

# Britain's Aid to Developing Countries

**The main considerations governing British aid policy and their application to Africa in particular have been outlined in recent speeches by the Minister for Overseas Development, Mr Christopher Patten.**

Britain spends about £1,300 million a year on aid; although this budget, along with other public spending, was cut between 1979 and 1982, it has risen in real terms since then. The aid budget is planned to increase by £48 million in 1987-88 and by £40 million in each of the following two years. Britain has the sixth largest aid programme in the world and the third largest in Europe. It spends about the same proportion of its gross national product on aid as the average of other member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and a much higher proportion of British aid – 80 per cent – goes to the poorest countries than is the case for the OECD as a whole.

Mr Patten spoke as the guest of the Royal Institute of International Affairs on 18 March and at the Royal Commonwealth Society on 28 April. The following summarises both speeches.

## AID POLICY

Aid programmes, Mr Patten explained, would always be justified on four main and inter-related grounds – political, commercial, humanitarian and developmental.

### Political Factors

There had always been political reasons for aid and some national programmes were manifestly determined by such factors. This was not the case with Britain's programme though these factors did count and some account was taken of a recipient country's behaviour in dispensing aid. Two-thirds of bilateral aid went to Commonwealth countries, reflecting 100 years or more of shared history and, in many cases, shared values and similar institutional arrangements.

A second area where politics and aid came together was that of human rights, recent experience in Ethiopia having shown how difficult it was to strike a balance between humanitarian impulses on the one hand and the support of regimes which trampled over human rights on the other. In 1986, under Britain's Presidency, the European Community had agreed a statement specifically linking human rights considerations with the disbursement of aid. Ethiopia provided a practical example of how this policy had been put into operation. Britain had given substantial help towards famine relief in 1984 and 1986 (see p 233, 1985) but would not give aid to resettlement programmes which had been subject to abuse.

Another example of political considerations was southern Africa: given Britain's doubts about the efficacy of more restrictive measures to encourage a peaceful dialogue in the region and the dismantling of 'the iniquitous apartheid system' in South Africa, it was right to place 'greater emphasis on positive help for those states which are in the front line geographically, politically and economically' (see pages 91-2). Britain would, therefore, do more to assist the region to develop a greater measure of economic independence from South Africa. Over £700 million had been spent by Britain in the region over the last five years and a major programme would be sustained in the future.

### Commercial Benefits

In helping to build up the economies of poorer countries, Britain was creating potential markets for its own trade. Similarly, incalculable long-term commercial benefits could result from the development of close links – whether educational or institutional – with such countries. Mr Patten doubted whether either of these considerations would give rise to controversy. Other propositions, however, were more open to dispute such as the tying of British aid to the purchase of British goods and whether aid for creditworthy countries could be properly used to support trade packages. Mr Patten did not think that tying in itself was objectionable if a project or programme was sound and if British goods were reasonably competitive. Nevertheless value for money had to be provided and aid could not be a subsidy for uncompetitive exporters. It was also necessary to safeguard the developmental quality of the aid programme, for Britain would be more likely to increase its share of growing markets if its actions were seen to be characterised by excellence. Instruments such as the Aid and Trade Provision (see p 263, 1986), together with the tying of British aid, meant that Britain did as much as anyone else 'to secure appropriate commercial benefit'. He recognised, however, that growing international competition in trade could produce equal competition in aid and that this would distort what donors should be trying to do. He welcomed, therefore, efforts being made through the OECD to negotiate restrictions and fairer rules on the relationship between aid and trade.

### Humanitarian Reasons

The ODA's Disaster Unit, Mr Patten continued, was at the heart of Britain's efforts to bring early relief to those affected by natural and man-made calamities. Such

humanitarian impulses, however, could help destroy rather than enhance development. Food aid, for example, was vital to keep millions of people alive but could be fatal if recipients became completely dependent on it. This was recognised by the Mozambican Government which, while needing food aid in the short term to meet its present emergency, saw this as a sign of failure and had discussed with Britain what it could do to help make food aid unnecessary in the future.

Food aid, emphasised Mr Patten, had provided a spurious moral justification for the surplus-producing agricultural policies of Europe, North America and Japan. The results of these subsidised surpluses had been disastrous; prices on world markets had been depressed, self reliance had been undermined and plenty in the temperate countries had added to the misery already caused by poverty, drought and disaster elsewhere. Moreover, while European governments had pushed up prices, too many African governments had held them down; incentives for local farmers had been cut, production had slumped and marginal land had been turned into desert. In the drought year of 1984, 140 million out of the total African population of 530 million had been fed entirely with grain from abroad.

The tide of opinion in Africa and in the donor countries had, fortunately started to turn. In several countries agricultural productivity had begun to rise as market-oriented policies had been introduced. Coarse grain output had risen by a third in 1985 and by a further 3·3 per cent in 1986. Donors, for their part, were giving more support for agricultural programmes. Britain, noted Mr Patten, had spent about £31 million on agriculture-related projects in Africa in 1985, in addition to technical co-operation, and was ready to increase the level of its support significantly. It was also contributing about one-fifth of the £4,800 million programme for Africa under the Third Lomé Convention (see pp 441-3, 1984), and most of this would be spent on agriculture. Moreover, Britain's research institutes would play an increasingly important part in support for agricultural production in such areas as plant protection, improved varieties of plants and soil and water conservation.

### Developmental Issues

The issue of how developing countries could be assisted was not straightforward, Mr Patten continued, since the whole notion of developed countries helping those which were developing could too easily imply a dangerously inexact and inappropriate model whose application on occasions in the past had been ruinous. It was, for instance, assumed that the West's path to development through the evolution of advanced capitalist economies had to be followed at breakneck pace by other countries with totally different social structures, resources, climates and ecosystems. 'Among the casualties of this approach is the environment of the countries on which it is visited. Sustainable development means nurturing what will grow organically in the country receiving assistance. Forced implants which take little or no account of the indigenous social and physical environment on which they are imposed will rarely succeed.'

Mr Patten said that policies were being changed in developing countries because previous ones had proved unsustainable. A more balanced and market-oriented approach was being followed in an increasing number of countries, and the West had to do all it could to help aid recipients make the painful adjustments which were sometimes necessary. Britain would devote a greater share of its aid budget in the coming year to policy reform in Africa. Dealing with the argument that developed countries were only interested in structural adjustment so that they could be debt collectors, Mr Patten said that such adjustment helped create stronger self-sustaining economies, better able to meet the financial obligations they had contracted. Western countries had provided substantial help to ease Africa's debt problem; Britain had written off £260 million owed by 13 low-income countries, this forming part of the £1,000 million debt relief it had made available to the world's poorest countries. In addition new capital had been provided; in 1985 OECD member countries' aid for Africa was $8,000 million – two and a half times the repayment of debt principal and interest. In that year Britain gave Africa £380 million, more than 16 times the amount of aid debt repaid.

The question of structural adjustment raised the question of support for the private sector in countries receiving aid. This posed some obvious difficulties when government-to-government programmes were being considered. There were four ways in which Britain helped private enterprise: through seeking to persuade governments to create the kind of atmosphere in which private enterprise could flourish; in helping to improve public services and the necessary infrastructure; by providing investment resources in the form of loans or equity (primarily through the Commonwealth Development Corporation [see pp 191-2, 1986]) to assist private enterprise where private sources of credit were insufficient; and by providing training in technology, management and business. Britain would be contributing £400,000 to the African Management Services Company and £300,000 to the African Project Development Facility, both of which were being set up by the International Finance Corporation to improve the quality of management and project design in the African private sector.

Mr Patten emphasised that it was vital to involve people in countries receiving aid in projects which were supposed to be helping to improve the quality of their lives. People were not simply the objects of development but also its instrument. It was equally important to pay proper regard to the role of women in development. Only 15 per cent of those on British training programmes were women and the British Government was talking to sponsor governments and asking them to nominate more women for training schemes. The provision of assistance through non-government organisations (NGOs) was also important, particularly in small-scale projects. Over the past three years support for the Joint Funding Scheme, under which the Government and the voluntary sector co-funded NGO projects, had doubled from £2·3 million to £5·3 million, and there would be a further increase of 13 per cent in 1987-88. Support for Voluntary Service Overseas – £6 million in 1986-87 – was planned to rise by 12 per cent in 1987-88. NGOs could make an especially effective contribution in primary health care which Britain was making a priority in its health and education programmes. This made more sense than building expensive facilities which put a strain on the current resources of the recipient. Those health programmes which moved laterally into literacy programmes were particularly attractive, there being a

close link between female illiteracy rates in particular and effective health and population programmes. These kinds of linkage had to be carefully worked out in order to sustain development.

## BRITAIN AND AFRICA

In Mr Patten's view, Britain and the West had a clear political interest in the stability of Africa and an equally clear moral obligation to help improve the prospects of those most in need. This rationale was strengthened by the economic deterioration that had taken place in the last few years in many African countries. Commodity prices had weakened, the price of imports had risen, several countries had been ravaged by famine and other natural catastrophes and several had been torn apart by war. In some cases, these had been exacerbated by inappropriate economic and social policies.

As one of the largest donors to Africa, Britain had over the past five years provided aid totalling some £2,500 million through bilateral and multilateral channels, including £550 million in 1986. It was, however, not enough simply to set aside large sums of money and hope for the best. Development was a partnership in which the primary role had to be played by the recipients, and African countries had recognised this at the United Nations Special Session on Africa in 1986 (see pp 187-8, 1986). Only African countries knew the limits of what was possible within their own political and cultural framework, and aid donors had to work within that context.

### Economic Adjustment

In recent years, Mr Patten said, African countries had been prepared to take radical steps to rebuild their economies; some 15 of them in sub-Saharan Africa currently were implementing International Monetary Fund and World Bank programmes. Because these involved political and social strains, no-one could be under any illusions about the boldness and determination being displayed by African politicians who were carrying out these reforms. Nevertheless in Tanzania, after years of stagnation, there was, despite the hardships, a greater air of optimism and there were more goods in the shops. Similarly the Mozambican Government had accepted that there was no alternative to the course on which it had embarked.

Although the philosophy of structural adjustment had its critics, it embraced a set of undeniable economic realities. Mr Patten pointed out that the private sector was crowded out of domestic capital markets if budget deficits were too high, while incentives to produce cash crops and new manufactures for export were reduced if exchange rates were over-valued. Equally, imports, especially of food, were made artificially cheaper and local farmers given less incentive to produce for the local market. At the same time government revenues were reduced because traders and small producers operated through parallel markets rather than official channels, the result being an impoverished public sector. As a result capital projects could not be maintained and essential services in health and education were starved of cash. Moreover, the potential of the private sector would not be realised unless the public sector was made more efficient, the economic climate liberalised and incentives introduced.

Although opinion was changing, these countries could not be expected to tackle such enormous tasks unaided. A high level of concessionary resources would be required if the momentum for change was not to falter and if the long-term benefits of reform were to be achieved. Britain was determined to do all it reasonably could and was encouraging multilateral agencies to follow suit. Funds were being set aside to provide balance of payments support for a number of countries. Ghana had been allocated £27 million since 1983, while £8 million had been pledged to The Gambia over the last two years. Other funds were being disbursed to Malawi and Somalia, while some £30 million, pledged to Zambia in 1987, was dependent on its progress in reaching agreement with the IMF. In the case of Tanzania, Britain had committed £50 million in less than a year, the bulk of it for balance of payments support. The Mozambique authorities had been informed that Britain would expect to provide a significant level of support, once they had reached agreement with the IMF.[1] The same applied in the cases of Uganda and Sudan.

The efforts of African countries to implement economic reforms with the support of donors would take time and Britain would have to sustain its efforts for many years ahead. It was partly for this reason that Britain was a strong supporter of the new and increased replenishment of the International Development Association, up to half of which could go to Africa. Britain would be contributing the equivalent of £524 million of the total of some $12,400 million. It had also supported proposals to treble the capital of the African Development Bank which was working increasingly closely on economic reforms with the World Bank and was discussing a significant replenishment of the African Development Fund within the limits of what the Bank could effectively handle.

Britain was conscious of the danger of reforms being blown off course by the introduction of measures which could prove too hard for particular groups in the population to bear. Nevertheless it believed that there was scope within the design of reforms for more attention to be paid to the poor and vulnerable groups.

### Debt

Although the provision of additional aid was clearly of central importance, there was no more persistent topic in the economic debates than the indebtedness of the target countries. The theory was that as their economies strengthened so would their ability to repay debts and that it was naturally important for them not to undermine their creditworthiness in the longer term. There was, however, little prospect of some of the poorest and most heavily indebted sub-Saharan countries being able to service all their debts in the foreseeable future for their burdens were simply far too immense. Britain had recognised this some years ago and for 13 of the poorest African countries had waived repayments of aid loans at a cost of £260 million.

Aid debts were only part of the problem since debts to export credit agencies for commercial transactions also imposed a heavy burden on some countries.

[1] It was announced on 7 May, during an official visit to Britain by the President of Mozambique, Joaquim Chissano, that Britain would provide grant aid of £15 million in the form of fast-disbursing balance of payments support, once the agreement with the IMF had been reached. Britain also reaffirmed its readiness to help combat the famine in Mozambique, and has already offered over £16 million in 1987 both as emergency aid, including food aid, and as help for long-term development.

Further exceptional help was required. At the spring meetings of the IMF and the World Bank Britain had urged all creditors to alleviate the debt burden of the poorest, most heavily indebted African countries which were pursuing sound economic policies, proposing that donors should convert aid loans into grants, that there should be longer repayment periods for other official loans with more generous grace periods before capital payments were due, and that interest payments should be reduced to a few percentage points below market levels. This plan, however, could only succeed if all creditor countries agreed to act together and if the debtor countries were implementing appropriate reform policies.

### Agriculture

An increasing number of African countries now accepted the need for incentives to farmers to grow more and one sign of progress was that African grain production in 1986 was over 20 per cent higher than the average for the first half of the 1980s. African governments had reaffirmed the importance of sensible agricultural policies. Britain believed that this would be reinforced if the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation could be headed by an African Director-General. Britain had therefore informed those governments that it would support the election of the candidate put forward unanimously by the Organisation of African Unity.

Mr Patten stressed that there was a need to liberalise world trade in agriculture and that this would bring significant benefits to developed and developing countries. In some cases world prices had been driven so low that it was hardly worthwhile for developing countries to export agricultural produce and they were unfairly handicapped by substantial artificial support for the products of industrial countries and by barriers raised against their exports. Moreover, countries suffering from shortages all too easily came to depend on subsidised imports. Britain was pressing for change in the European Community, at the annual economic summits and, above all, in the new round of trade negotiations within the framework of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (see p 328, 1986).

Within the European Community Britain had consistently argued for lower support prices and, as far as food aid was concerned, had taken the initiative to bring about a fundamental change of approach by the Community. This meant that the main purpose of Community food aid, on which £330 million had been spent in 1985, would now be the promotion of development rather than the disposal of agricultural surpluses. Where possible, food given as aid to Africa would be bought from African countries themselves, thereby helping countries with food surpluses and those with food deficits. Britain, for example, had bought 14,000 tonnes of maize in Kenya for Ethiopia and the 21,000 tonnes of maize given to Mozambique over the last year had all come from Zimbabwe. The recent British pledge of a further 30,000 tonnes for Mozambique would also be purchased from neighbouring countries if possible.

Noting that potential aid donors had to be selective in what they tried to do, Mr Patten stressed the need for programmes to be maintained once donors withdrew. With this aim in mind Britain was engaged in a variety of endeavours, including a tsetse control and eradication programme in Somalia designed to free tracts of land for productive use; forestry development in Ghana; and fisheries projects in the Red Sea, on the Tanzania coast and at Lake Niassa. Irrigation pumps were being rehabilitated in the Sudan and new rural development projects established in Zimbabwe and Malawi. In all these Britain would continue to stress the need to strengthen local institutions.

Mr Patten said that there was a close link between economic policy reform and environmental concern and Britain was supporting a number of specifically environmental projects (see below). Britain was ready to do more, especially on the control of insect pests which could have a devastating effect on food crops. The Tropical Development and Research Institute would help in devising control measures which would be tailored to local crop varieties, agricultural practices, knowledge and cost, and which would cause minimum disruption to the environment. Britain also planned to do more in the natural resources area such as improvements to the transport system to enable agricultural potential to be realised. Major roads financed by Britain in Kenya and Tanzania had helped to open up the country and the Government hoped to make a substantial contribution over the next few years to the rehabilitation of the railways in these two countries. There was also a new scheme in Kenya aimed at improving rural roads in Kenyan tea-growing districts.

### Technical Co-operation

Britain also had a widespread programme of technical co-operation and training without which financial aid would be much less effective. In 1986 there were over 6,000 aid-financed trainees from Africa in Britain, almost half in the fields of engineering technology, education and agriculture. There were also over 1,000 British experts serving in sub-Saharan Africa. Britain's aim for some time had been to make its contribution more effective by concentrating on key institutions and defining its objectives more sharply. This was especially important in education which accounted for half Britain's total manpower efforts and was relevant in public administration.

Concluding, Mr Patten said: 'Our programme in Africa as a whole . . . is extensive and imaginative. . . . What we are trying above all to do is to aid Africans to build their own countries on secure foundations. We want to assist them to become stronger and more self-reliant. . . . I hope that the initiatives we have taken in debt and agriculture will help to make this partnership more successful.'

## Aid and the Environment

**Britain's commitment, through its overseas aid programme, to helping developing countries tackle the related problems of the environment and development are described in a booklet prepared as part of the British contribution to the European Year of the Environment running from March 1987 to March 1988. Britain has welcomed a report by the World Commission on Environment and Development which calls for greater economic growth based on sustainable use of natural resources.**

The World Commission on Environment and Development, set up by the United Nations General Assembly in 1983 and chaired by the Norwegian Prime Minister, Mrs Gro Harlem Brundtland, published its report in April.[1] This says that crises relating to the world's environment and development are linked and that economic interdependence has increased among nations. It focuses its attention on the areas of population, food security, the loss of species and genetic resources, energy, industry and human settlements, and emphasises that all these are connected and cannot be treated in isolation from one another. The report calls for more economic growth based on sustainable development defined as 'a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs'.

Commenting on the report on 27 April, the Minister for Environment, Countryside and Planning, Mr William Waldegrave, said that the Government would like to see international attention focused on three main questions highlighted by the report; these were how to achieve economic growth without damaging the environment, how to bring environment and development together in an integrated way and how the necessary sense of environmental care was to be nurtured to tackle urgent global issues. The Commission's report is due to be debated by the UN General Assembly later this year.

## BRITISH POLICY

The booklet on British aid policy and the environment published by the Overseas Development Administration (ODA)[2] stresses that renewable natural resources are being threatened by human activities and the rapid rise in population. Two hundred years ago the world population was below 1,000 million, but since then it has grown from 1,600 million in 1900 to 5,000 million in 1986, and by the year 2000 it is expected to reach 6,500 million. In the poorer countries, where population pressures are greatest, people have tended to migrate to and farm on marginal lands where soils are poor and the ecological system more fragile. As a result, physical resources are being eroded, as illustrated by the loss of the world's forests and the advance of desert.

The purpose of the British aid programme, as outlined in an introduction to the booklet, is to help and encourage those who receive aid to develop their own societies in their own ways. The efforts of the poorer countries, however, are being undermined by the overriding problems of population growth and environmental degradation. Since Britain is aiming to find ways by which environmental factors can enter into the political, social and economic calculations which lie behind aid in all its forms, it is revising its own practices to take better account of environmental considerations.

In its efforts to help raise social and economic living standards in developing countries, Britain has always given consideration to environmental factors. Among various initiatives to integrate such concerns into its aid activities the ODA gave support to the 1986 World Conservation Strategy Conference in Ottawa, where a British team helped draw up guidelines for aid donors and recipients alike on the need for sustainable development. The ODA has on its staff two professional anthropologists and in 1986 appointed an Environmental/Research Adviser. In addition it has established a Natural Resources and Environment Department which has developed an early warning procedure by means of which the likely environmental effects of aid projects can be scrutinised at the earliest stage.

Nearly one-third of the ODA's staff are professionally qualified natural resources advisers or scientists. Those working at the Government's two scientific units, the Land Resources Development Centre and the Tropical Development and Research Institute (soon to become one unit – the Overseas Development Natural Resources Institute – see p 55), also bring much professional experience and knowledge to bear on environmental problems. Through these various sources of expertise, Britain has been able to contribute to the debate on the environmental record of the multilateral aid donors such as the European Community, the World Bank and the regional development banks. A forestry adviser from the Land Resources Development Centre, for example, has been seconded to help the European Commission to implement its forestry programme.

### Agriculture

The challenge facing the poorer countries is to find ways of increasing agricultural production to match the rise in population, while adopting patterns of farming appropriate to local ecosystems.

Britain is currently assisting a number of major programmes concerned with agricultural intensification: the Indo-British Fertiliser Education Programme in India and the Equatoria Region Agricultural Project in Sudan are two examples. Assistance is also being given with the search for sustainable systems for marginal areas, for example the Embu, Meru and Isiolo Project in Kenya and the Western Savannah Project in Sudan. In the last, in conjunction with the World Bank, the ODA is helping to find ways to arrest the environmental decline suffered in the remote and arid province of South Darfur where there has been a rapid rise in the human and animal population, due partly to natural increase but also to the arrival of refugees from Chad and displaced persons from North Darfur.

Care is taken to ensure that all agricultural programmes are environmentally sound and some projects are specially designed to treat environmental problems. For example, in the rangelands of northern Kenya and south Somalia population pressure has resulted in the cultivation of the scattered higher rainfall areas, which has deprived the livestock of dry season grazing on which the survival of the pastoral system depends. Britain is therefore assisting a complex land use planning exercise in the area.

### Forestry

The rapid decline of tropical forests has serious consequences for living standards, because about one-half of the world's population is dependent upon wood for cooking and heating. Forests are also an important economic resource for both local and export industries, but in some western African countries timber is now

[1] *Our Common Future*. Oxford University Press. £5·95. ISBN 0 19 282080 X.

[2] *The Environment and the British Aid Programme*. Available free from the Overseas Development Administration, Eland House, Stag Place, London SW1E 5DH.

being imported, and industries in India which use wood are running at half their capacity because of lack of raw materials.

In many developing countries the rate at which trees are cut down is three times the rate of replanting, and over 60 countries receiving aid still have insufficient fuelwood. Good management practices are therefore extremely important to the efficient renewal of tropical forests. Britain assists in this area by funding inventories which can identify species in a forest and find out which trees can be safely harvested without detriment to future sustainability. Countries helped in this way include Ghana, Grenada and Botswana, while in Bangladesh recommendations arising from the Sundarbans Forest Inventory Project, completed in 1985, are helping to conserve one of the region's most valuable natural resources. Britain's contribution also included a visit by a wildlife specialist to the area, which is an important habitat for a range of animal species, including the Royal Bengal tiger. The ODA is financing research into problems of tropical forest management including seed viability and storage; species selection for enrichment planting in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu; and regeneration studies in Ghana and Honduras.

Reafforestation can have important environmental benefits for already degraded land. The Mysore Paper Mills Forestry Project in southern India, for example, supported by British aid, is setting up plantations on state land which has become barren through previous deforestation in order to supply wood for paper manufacture. In addition to the industrial benefits of the project, the trees provide shade and shelter and help reduce silting of the local reservoirs. Moreover, as these plantations have reduced the need to harvest natural bamboo for paper manufacture, this can regenerate and be more readily available for use by the village people.

In parallel with intensified reafforestation, Britain has assisted with the introduction of more efficient wood- and charcoal-burning kilns and stoves, particularly in conjunction with local non-government organisations, and mainly in The Gambia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The work is carried out through the Tropical Development and Research Institute and the Intermediate Technology Development Group. Other areas of assistance include support for agroforestry, where trees are grown on farms together with crops; farm forestry, where lines of trees or woodlots are grown on unused patches of land; research on the influence of fast-growing trees on soil, water supplies and other crops; and research to investigate low soil fertility.

The ODA is assisting, through its Joint Funding Scheme (see below), a three-year project to be run by the World Wildlife Fund to help create a small area of 125,000 hectares in Cameroon as the country's first National Rainforest Park. Thought to be Africa's richest rain forest, the proposed management plan for the park seeks to create a buffer zone around the protected area while developing sustainable land use patterns for 30,000 farmers. Britain is helping to draw up the land use plan which aims for long-term improvement in productivity from the buffer zone so that farmers will be able to make a reasonable living without further clearance of the forest.

Wherever possible British aid is co-ordinated with that of other donors through the 1985 Food and Agriculture Organisation's Tropical Forestry Action Plan. This aims to reduce soil erosion, develop less wasteful forest industries, use fuelwood on a sustainable basis and conserve forest ecosystems through better management.

### Fisheries

Fish are an important source of food in many developing countries, contributing an estimated 40 per cent of the total protein eaten by about half of their populations. Successful management of wild stocks, which provide most of the fish and are entirely dependent on the natural environment, depends greatly on limiting environmental degradation. Modern human activities have tended to pollute or reduce the extent of the tropical habitats where fish breed; in the Sundarbans mangrove forest in Bangladesh, for example, where wood is being cut to clear land for food crops, or in the Maldive Islands, where reefs are quarried for coral to construct roads and houses. Britain is helping to minimise the adverse effects of these activities by introducing new forestry management techniques to the Sundarbans and by funding research to develop a management policy in the Maldives which will reconcile the interests of the construction industry, fishermen and tourists, while minimising the adverse effects of all these activities on the reefs.

Britain also contributes through the Tropical Development and Research Institute to the resolution of post-harvest problems, an area which has significant environmental implications. For example, the development of universally acceptable methods to process and handle the estimated 21 million tonnes of small fish, currently discarded as a bycatch from shrimp trawling, would possibly reduce fishing pressures on other species, as would reduction of some 4 million tonnes a year spoilt during processing and storage.

At the University of Stirling, the ODA supports research into acquaculture, as a result of which a technique for small-scale fish farming at the village and family level has been introduced in north-east Thailand, where fish has always formed a major part of the diet of country people. The system involves the introduction of an improved strain of an African freshwater tilapia into village and family ponds. The fish feed on aquatic weeds whose growth is stimulated by the application of buffalo manure as fertiliser, the buffaloes being owned and used by the villagers for working the land. The system does not therefore damage the environment and is a natural extension of the villagers' farming practices.

### Industry and Infrastructure

In providing assistance for the development of industry and infrastructure, the ODA carries out a thorough analysis of the various factors and conflicting interests involved in any project, ensuring that social and environmental concerns are brought into the appraisal from the outset and are fully integrated in the design and implementation of the project. In Cairo, for example, where the population has become so large that its antiquated sewerage system can no longer cope, Britain is involved in a major modernisation project. As a result of the expense and technical complexity of treating sewage, the ODA is currently investigating alternative treatments utilising other biological processes such as reed beds and suitable crop cultivation patterns which will produce acceptably clean effluent.

In Nepal, Britain helped build a road north from Dharan on the plains to Dhankuta, the principal town in the Kosi Hills. The road, substantially completed in 1983, was designed to avoid the drainage and soil erosion problems prevalent in the area. Much thought was given in the engineering and construction of the road to minimise any environmental damage and care was taken to ensure that it did not adversely affect existing watercourses, depriving farmers of vital irrigation supplies. The established forest and bush cover on the road line was observed wherever possible, and carefully chosen species of bushes and grasses were planted on the new embankments. Bamboo, for example, was seen as especially important along stream banks, and it has helped to prevent further deforestation by providing a fast-growing material which the local traditional builders can use instead of cutting down the indigenous trees.

Power generation in Bangladesh provides an example of a nation wanting to make the most of its natural resources. Electricity serving the capital, Dhaka, is generated by thermal power plants fuelled by onshore natural gas. The transmission and distribution system to the city, funded by Britain, delivers power cleanly and safely, with a minimum of land use and environmental disruption.

**Research and Development**

Applied research has an important role to play in the management of natural resources for it is only from a clear understanding of the complex physical, social and economic inter-relationships that effective strategies can be deployed for sustainable development. Because developing countries are only beginning to bring together the facilities to study these issues, the ODA has given high priority to supporting research with useful environmental benefits. In doing so it draws upon the expertise of its two scientific units which carry out a great deal of work relevant to environmental concerns. Research carried out at many British universities and institutes, often in collaboration with institutions in aid-receiving countries, supplements the work of the units.

The range of research is wide and varied and has included, for example, the methodological problems of assessing pollution of inland water from pesticide residues due to tsetse spraying; research into the effects of dams on local population; and a study on the effects on human health of irrigation schemes. Research currently being carried out in a joint programme by the Universities of Bangor and Sussex and the Plant Breeding Institute at Cambridge involves studies to elucidate the mechanisms of salt tolerance in the world's two most important cultivated cereals, rice and wheat. By identifying these mechanisms, and those species and strains which can withstand saline conditions, it will be possible to produce reasonable crops in areas which have become saline, either naturally or through the activities of man. Such results could have far-reaching implications in environmental studies, for example, by enabling plants with high salt tolerance to be used in land reclamation.

Although pesticides and insecticides play an important part in reducing crop losses, they have in the past been over-used. Britain has been closely involved in work designed to minimise application by identifying the outbreak areas of major migratory pests such as locusts or armyworm. Selective spraying in these areas prevents large-scale invasions and keeps the insecticide application zone to the minimum. The Tropical Development and Research Institute has also been involved in developing other new methods of pest control utilising 'insect scents' or pheromones. Field trials relevant to the research are now being carried out in Kenya and Tanzania. The ODA is also funding the development of crops with natural resistance to insect pests and plant diseases.

**Joint Funding Scheme**

The ODA assists hundreds of aid projects organised by non-government agencies, many of which are directed at social and environmental problems. Examples include Oxfam's reafforestation programme on Sabu Island in Indonesia, bee-keeping programmes by Oxfam and Christian Aid in Bangladesh and Zaire, and Christian Aid's project in Mali designed to alleviate the problem of deforestation in the Sahel through the production of improved wood-burning stoves.

# Shorter Note

## IMMIGRATION CONTROL IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

A meeting of European Community ministers responsible for immigration was held in Brussels on 28 April. Ministers recommended that all member states should make carriers responsible for removing anyone brought by them into a Community country without the necessary documents and for meeting the costs involved. Penalties should also be imposed on carriers bringing passengers without the required documents. It was also agreed that simplified procedures should be established for reaching decisions where asylum was claimed but the application was unjustified because it failed to meet the requirements of the 1951 United Nations Convention.

Ways of combating the increasing use of forged papers were also agreed. An information bulletin giving particulars of cases of fraud would be circulated to immigration authorities as part of their exchange of information and officials would continue to co-operate in developing fraud-proof documents. Ministers also endorsed the work of officials on strengthening immigration controls at external frontiers and were in favour of greater harmonisation of visa policy.

Commenting on the meeting the Home Secretary, Mr Douglas Hurd, said that he welcomed the progress made in developing a common approach to the control of immigration in Europe. The action the British Government had taken in introducing the Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Bill (see pp 120-1) was fully in line with the conclusions of the meeting.

Source: *Hansard*, Vol 115, No 100, written answers, cols 258-9.

# ECONOMIC AND SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS

## Inward Investment

**With over 300 foreign companies deciding to invest in Britain in 1986, the country's position as the leader in attracting international investment in Europe was further consolidated, according to the annual report of the Invest in Britain Bureau.**

Published in mid-April, the report[1] shows that 1986 was the fourth year in succession in which the number of foreign companies deciding to locate or expand in Britain had reached a new record level.

In an introduction to the report, the Minister of State for Industry, Mr Giles Shaw, says that the companies bring with them significant benefits for Britain. Since 1980 foreign investment projects have directly created or safeguarded more than 200,000 jobs. The companies place contracts worth many millions of pounds with British construction, component and service companies; contribute to the balance of payments through export sales; and introduce innovative technologies and production techniques as well as new styles of management and industrial relations. Foreign companies are increasing their level of investment, he says, because it is to their commercial advantage; and this represents a tremendous vote of confidence in the strength and stability and future of the British economy.

### Inward Investment in 1986

The number of investment projects recorded by the Invest in Britain Bureau increased by 6 per cent from 305 to 322. As in recent years, the major sources of direct investment in Britain were North America (United States 164 projects, Canada 8) and Western Europe (119). The Federal Republic of Germany (46) and Scandinavia (25) broadly maintained their respective share of projects. The report notes that investment from Japan increased encouragingly from 13 projects in 1985 to 22 in 1986.

Although the number of inward investment decisions rose for the fourth year running, the Bureau says that the volume of active cases (defined as specific projects where either a decision is expected within a year of the Bureau's contact with the company, or where a decision may be more than a year away but has involved substantial work by the Bureau) fell by 20 per cent in 1986, from 892 cases in the preceding year to 706. This largely reflects changes in the American market, where some companies are deferring investment decisions in response to continuing uncertainties about the United States' economic situation, the report says.

[1] *Invest in Britain Bureau. Annual Report 1986.* Available free from the Invest in Britain Bureau, Department of Trade and Industry, Bridge Place, 88-9 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1PT.

Increased competition among European countries for internationally mobile projects had also influenced the investment market, although Britain had lost very few such projects to competitors in 1986, and currency movements, including the relative fall in value of the US dollar and the strength of the yen, had also played a part.

With reference to the 322 investment decisions recorded in 1986, the report notes that the scale of the projects, in terms of capital invested and associated employment, was on average smaller than in recent years. This is not unduly surprising, it says. Britain is already host to nearly all of the 100 largest American corporations, the leading European multinational companies and all of the major Japanese consumer electronics companies which have set up in Europe. New investment, therefore, will increasingly originate from medium-sized and small companies; and expansion by foreign companies already investing in Britain – which now account for 40 per cent of inward investment projects – usually involves less incremental capital and employment than completely new investment.

The importance to Britain of inward investment is revealed by the fact that, although foreign-owned companies represent less than 2 per cent of British manufacturing establishments, they account for nearly 15 per cent of employment, 17·5 per cent of wages and salaries, over 20 per cent of net output, and 21 per cent of net capital expenditure, according to the 1984 census of production.

Britain will continue to be an attractive location for international investment, the report says. Among the reasons for this are the ready access that Britain provides to the 360 million consumers of the European Community; its corporation tax and schemes of financial assistance to industry; and the fact that it is enjoying a period of strong and sustained economic growth, with low inflation and a growth of productivity in manufacturing (up 33 per cent between 1980 and 1986) that is one of the highest among the major industrialised countries.

*North America*

Britain remains the largest recipient of United States direct investment in the European Community. At the end of 1985 total United States investment in Britain was valued at $US 34,000 million (about £23,500 million), representing over 41 per cent of United States investment in the Community. The Federal Republic of Germany was the next largest area with just over 20 per cent. The rate of growth of United States direct investment in Britain was nearly 19 per cent in 1985, which was over double the worldwide rate.

Notable individual projects in 1986 included the Compaq Computer Corporation's decision to locate

its first European manufacturing plant at Erskine in Scotland. The investment of £16 million is expected to create 350 jobs over the next four years in a factory producing the full range of Compaq portable and desk-top computers.

The Du Pont company also announced plans to build an electronics connectors factory near Bristol, which is expected to employ some 400 people. Construction will begin during 1987.

Nearly half of the United States direct investment in Britain in 1986 was by companies already operating in Britain.

*Europe*

While the 119 investment decisions by European companies in 1986 was much the same figure as in the previous year, there was an encouraging increase of 21 per cent in the number of jobs created, the report says, and the number of new inquiries received rose by 20 per cent.

A particularly large investment in 1986 was by the Netherlands company, Centre Parcs, which is developing a £32 million all-weather holiday village in Sherwood Forest. The project will create some 200 jobs.

Another new investor in 1986 was the French firm Peaudouce, which announced that it would build a £14 million plant, creating 230 jobs, at Telford in the West Midlands of England.

Another French company, Peugeot Talbot, which has been operating in Britain for a number of years, announced that it had decided to build its new family saloon car in a new plant alongside its existing factory at Ryton, near Coventry. The project will create 700 new jobs and involve investment of £19 million.

In London, there was continued activity in the financial services, with the opening of new branches by a number of European banks.

Britain is the leading location in Europe for investment by companies from the Federal Republic of Germany. Figures provided by the Federal Ministry of Economics show that during the period 1982-85 investments in Britain increased three times over. The most recent survey by the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce revealed that more than 700 companies from the Federal Republic have subsidiaries in Britain, of which 200 have production facilities. A majority of these companies claimed good productivity and labour relations, and 87 per cent of them were planning further expansion within five years.

*Japan*

At the end of 1986 there were 48 Japanese manufacturing companies located in, or committed to locating in, Britain – a higher number than in any other European country. Since the arrival of the first manufacturer in 1972 (YKK Fasteners) Japanese companies have announced investment decisions which will create or safeguard some 17,500 jobs. In 1986 they announced investments amounting to some £75 million, which will create or safeguard over 2,600 jobs directly.

Notable projects announced in 1986 included a plan by Hitachi to invest £7 million in a new microwave-oven plant in Hirwaun in south Wales, alongside a factory where it currently makes colour television sets, and video and hi-fi equipment. The new project will create about 200 jobs.

The Sony company also announced expansion in 1986, with the extension of its Welsh factory producing colour television sets; Sanyo is adding a video tape recorder plant to its existing television manufacturing centre in Lowestoft, Suffolk; and Sharp is to add an electronic typewriter plant to its existing factory at Wrexham in north Wales. Another significant event was the opening of the Nissan car factory in north-east England, and the announcement by the company that it would be bringing forward its plans for full British manufacture.

# Industrial Relations

**Concern over national pay bargaining, the growing use of secret ballots before industrial action, and the growth of 'new style' agreements were among the developments noted in the annual report of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS), published on 29 April.[1] The decline in trade union membership has continued and a growing number of mergers occurred in 1986, according to the annual report of the Certification Officer, published on 27 April.[2]**

## ACAS REPORT

### Pattern of Employment

Output and employment rose during 1986, although employment in manufacturing continued to decline. Improvements in productivity varied widely, but for much of industry 'the constructive control of labour costs remains a key priority'. Changes in the pattern of employment were partly in response to pressures for more productive use of labour. Part-time employment grew, particularly among women, as did temporary work, while there were indications that a number of larger organisations were seeking to contract out more of their peripheral activities. Some organisations employ a combination of key permanent workers together with others who are employed according to seasonal or other market conditions, and the report says that this appears likely to increase.

### Technological and Structural Change

According to the report, there is growing evidence that recent technological changes have been welcomed by the great majority of employees. Results from the survey of workplace industrial relations (for publication details see p 79), sponsored jointly by ACAS, the Department of Employment, the Policy Studies Institute and the Economic and Social Research Council, showed widespread technological change during the 1980s; interviews with over 4,500 managers and trade union representatives in some 2,000 workplaces in 1984 found that over three-quarters of manual workers in manufacturing industry were employed at places which had experienced major change in the recent past and

[1] *Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service Annual Report 1986.* Available free from ACAS, 11-12 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LA. ISBN 0 906073 31 6.

[2] *Annual Report of the Certification Officer 1986.* Available free from the Certification Office for Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, 15-17 Ormond Yard, Duke of York Street, London SW1Y 6JT.

over half in establishments where advanced technological change (involving equipment incorporating microelectronics) had occurred. In general, employees strongly supported the introduction of new technology, with managers reporting major resistance to change on only 2 per cent of occasions. Advanced technological change was widely welcomed, with production and works managers reporting favourable reaction from manual workers in three-quarters of the cases where this type of change had been introduced, while for office workers ready acceptance was even higher.

However, the survey found that other types of change, particularly proposals for restructuring working methods, faced much greater opposition from employees, especially, according to ACAS, where attempts to introduce organisational change were made without prior discussion and consultation. In the survey three-quarters of works managers and personnel specialists said that organisational changes had faced initial opposition from manual workers.

### National Pay Bargaining

The report refers to the concern expressed about the continuing usefulness of pay determination at industry rather than at company or at local level, with critics of national agreements on pay and other conditions claiming that they could restrict rather than enhance flexibility in the use of labour, and thus discourage the growth of employment opportunities.[1] ACAS records that some firms, such as the largest water authority and certain engineering companies, are withdrawing or preparing to withdraw from national bargaining. However, it also notes that other concerns support national bargaining, seeing it as establishing a framework for discussions, together with a range of key minimum rates which many employers may wish to supplement.

### Role of the Law

The report notes the effects resulting from the Employment Act 1980 (see pp 21-3, 1980), the Employment Act 1982 (see pp 78-80, 1982) and the Trade Union Act 1984 (see pp 436-8, 1983, and 312-13, 1984), in particular the provisions made for ballots. During 1986 there was a decline in ballots seeking approval for the operation of a 'closed shop' (formally known as a union membership agreement), and ACAS believes that by the end of 1986 no more than 30,000 employees were covered by formally approved closed shops. Under the Trade Union Act 1984 trade unions are required to hold elections by secret ballot for voting members of their principal executive body, and ACAS noted during 1986 that many unions were amending their rules to conform with the law, while a number were making increasing use of postal ballots. The 1984 Act also requires a secret ballot of employees before industrial action if the trade union concerned and its officials are to retain immunity from liability to damages. There was an increase in the number of ballots during 1986, with a generally high turnout, and ACAS's impression is that employers and unions are coming to see ballots before industrial action as a permanent part of negotiating arrangements.

[1]In a speech in February 1987, the Paymaster General and Minister for Employment, Mr Kenneth Clarke, said that national pay bargaining was remote and destroyed jobs. It took insufficient account of the different circumstances of individual enterprises, or of local variations in the demand for workers and in the cost of living. He favoured a system where pay increases were dependent primarily on performance, merit, company profitability, and demand and supply in the local labour market.

### 'New Style' Agreements

The report notes the growth of 'new style' agreements, often identified with a number of Japanese companies which have established plants in Britain in recent years. In 1986 these agreements were found not only in a number of other overseas-owned companies, but also in an increasing range of indigenous organisations which have established new plants and offices. ACAS says that, while the individual components have been used from time to time, the feature of the new agreements is that they form integrated packages of measures 'designed to reinforce pressures for consensus'. The main features of the agreements have been recognition of a single union, 'single status' (aimed at eliminating traditional distinctions between managers, supervisors and other employees), arrangements for employee participation, flexibility in working practices, an emphasis on training and retraining, a 'no strike' undertaking, and 'pendulum' arbitration, in which a third party is asked to choose between the positions of management and of employees. Many of the companies involved aim at highly participative managerial styles, using various channels such as company 'advisory boards' and systems of managerial, supervisory and employee meetings and bulletins, as well as more conventional consultative committees. These channels are being used to discuss not only the normal range of terms and conditions of employment, but also broader issues including business strategy, investment policy, trading performance, operating efficiency and future manpower plans.

### The Work of ACAS

The report says that, although the number of industrial disputes was at a low level (see p 100), requests for action by ACAS (an independent statutory body with the general duty of promoting the improvement of industrial relations) continued at a high level. It received 1,457 requests for collective conciliation, and maintained private and informal contact in a further 540 disputes without becoming actively involved in conciliation. In 86 per cent of the cases completed in 1986 no industrial action took place. ACAS gives advice on all aspects of industrial relations and employment policies to employers, managers, trade unions and individuals, and it handled 267,000 general inquiries in 1986, while its specialist staff made nearly 9,000 advisory visits. In connection with its responsibility for attempting conciliation on complaints of infringement of individual employee rights (such as complaints of unfair dismissal), it received a record 51,400 cases, 20 per cent more than in 1985.

## CERTIFICATION OFFICER'S REPORT

The Certification Officer for Trade Unions and Employers' Associations is an independent authority responsible for, among other things, maintaining lists of trade unions and of employers' associations, determining the independence of trade unions, securing observance of the statutory procedures governing mergers of trade unions and of employers' associations, and supervising requirements for the operation of political funds. At the end of 1986 there were 375 trade unions and 148 employers' associations listed by the Certification Officer. The number of unions fell during the year by 34, mainly reflecting trade union mergers, and the Office recorded 32 mergers, the highest in any

year since its establishment in 1976. Membership of listed unions continued to fall during 1985 and by the end of the year was 10·8 million, compared with the peak membership of 13·2 million recorded in 1979. At the end of 1986, 44 trade unions maintained political funds. Five new funds were established during the year, but nine funds ceased to exist because the unions concerned had not held a review ballot by 31 March 1986, as required under the Trade Union Act 1984.

# Consumer Protection Bill

**A government Bill dealing with consumer safety and other consumer protection measures has had an unopposed second reading in the House of Commons. The main provisions make producers liable for damage caused by defects in their products, make it an offence to supply unsafe goods and make it an offence to give misleading price indications.**

## Provisions of the Bill

*Product Liability*

Part I of the Bill implements a European Community directive on product liability (see p 238, 1986). The principal provision is that where any damage is caused wholly or partly by a defect in a product, the producer, importer or 'own brander' would be liable for the damage. The liability is in addition to existing liability under British law arising out of breach of contract or negligence.

Products, generally speaking, means goods, but includes services such as gas, water and electricity. Buildings are not included, however, and neither is printed matter except when it is an instruction or warning for a product. Primary agricultural products are specifically excluded. Components and raw materials are both included in the definition of a product; so that if a final product contains a defect in a particular component, for example, then both the manufacturer of the final product and the component manufacturer are liable.

Producers and importers are mainly liable under the Bill, other suppliers, such as retailers, only being liable if they do not identify the person who supplied them with the product.

The producer is usually the manufacturer, or, in the case of raw materials, the person who mined or otherwise obtained it. Processors, such as pea canners, are also covered, but people who package goods are not included unless their packaging alters essential characteristics of the product. (They may still be regarded as suppliers, however.)

Importers means people who import into the European Community. Thus, if a product is imported from outside the Community into the Federal Republic of Germany, for example, and is subsequently sold in Britain, liability falls on the German importer, not on any subsequent British one. British producers will thus be liable for their goods wherever they are sold in the Community.

'Own branders' are people who put their name or mark on a product and give the impression that they are the producers of it.

A product is defined as defective if its safety is not such as people are generally entitled to expect. Courts may take into account the manner in which the product is marketed; any instructions given with it; the things that might be reasonably expected to be done with the product; and the time when the producer supplied the product. (The last point covers the ageing of goods and subsequent improvements in safety standards.)

It must be the case that the defect can be proved to have caused the damage. The kinds of damage covered include death, personal injury and damage exceeding £275 done to an individual's private property.

*Defences for Producers*

Producers will be able to escape from liability if they can prove that any one of a number of defences can be maintained. The extent of their liability will be affected by any contributory negligence on the part of the plaintiff.

The 'development risks' defence gives a producer a defence if the state of scientific and technical knowledge when the goods were supplied was not such that a producer might have been expected to discover the defect.

Other defences are:

—that the defect was caused by compliance with the law;

—that the producer did not in fact supply the goods;

—that the supplier was not acting by way of business (covering, for example, sales by private individuals of second-hand goods);

—that the defect was not in the product at the time it was supplied;

—that, in the case of a component, the defect was due either to the design of the finished product or to specifications that the producer of the finished product gave to the component manufacturer.

*General Safety Requirement*

Part II of the Bill contains a general safety requirement, supplementing the regulations and prohibition orders made under the Consumer Safety Act 1978, and giving legal status to the proposals made in the White Paper, *The Safety of Goods* (Cmnd 9302), issued in July 1984.

The Bill makes it a criminal offence to supply consumer goods which are not reasonably safe, having regard to all the circumstances. The provision is restricted to consumer goods; goods for use at work are covered by the Health and Safety at Work Act (see pp 177-9, 1974). Unlike product liability, the provision applies to anyone who supplies the goods, although there is an important defence for retailers – that they neither knew nor had reasonable grounds for believing that the goods failed to comply with the general safety requirement.

'Safe' is defined as reducing to a minimum the risk of death or personal injury. Circumstances which may be taken into account include: the manner in which the goods are marketed and any instructions or warnings provided; any published safety standards for those goods; and the means and costs of making the goods safer.

A supplier may escape liability if it can be proved that the goods were for export, or were not offered for purchase as new. Retailers have a defence if there was no ground to suspect that the goods failed to comply

with the general safety requirement. If the goods comply with a Community obligation, any relevant safety regulation, or approved safety standard, then they will not be regarded as failing to comply with the requirement.

Other provisions of Part II facilitate the making of regulations on consumer safety.

*Misleading Price Indications*

Part III creates a general criminal offence – that of giving to consumers a misleading price indication about any goods, services, accommodation or facilities. There is a related offence to deal with the situation where a price indication is not at first misleading, but subsequently becomes so (when out of date, for example). The coverage of the Bill extends to more types of price indication than the legislation which it replaces (section 11 of the Trades Descriptions Act 1968 and the Price Marking (Bargain Offers) Order 1979).

The provision is to be backed up by a Code of Practice, which will give detailed guidance to traders. The Government intends to define the status of this code by an amendment during the committee stage which will state that while compliance with the code will not constitute a complete defence for a trader, compliance or contravention will tend to establish innocence or guilt.

*Other Provisions*

Parts IV and V of the Bill are mainly concerned with the consolidation of enforcement provisions in earlier consumer safety legislation, with minor amendments to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and with various supplementary measures. Part V also repeals the Trades Descriptions Act 1972, which requires imported goods bearing certain kinds of names or marks to be accompanied by a conspicuous indication of the country of origin.

**Minister's Speech**

Introducing the second reading debate on the Bill on 27 April, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate and Consumer Affairs, Mr Michael Howard, said that the Bill offered real gains both for consumers and for responsible businesses (*Hansard*, Vol 115, No 96, cols 51-92). For most purposes, the best protection that consumers could have was provided by fair competition among businesses in an open market. The Bill addressed two forms of unfair competition. Supplying unsafe goods was a form of unfair competition as it gave their supplier an unfair advantage over a competitor who was prepared to incur the costs associated with ensuring that goods were safe. It was also, of course, a particularly objectionable practice in its own right. Fair competition would also be prevented if consumers were given false or misleading information on which to base the decisions that they made in the market place.

On the question of product liability, Mr Howard noted that injured consumers had at present two avenues for seeking redress – the law of contract and the law of negligence. But there were deficiencies in both routes. Under the law of contract, only the immediate purchaser could be compensated, and only by the immediate supplier. Under the law of negligence, compensation could be gained directly from the manufacturer only if the injured person could show that the manufacturer had been negligent. Under Part I of the Bill, which stemmed from a European Community directive, any person able to show that an injury resulted from a lack of safety in a product would be able to secure compensation from the manufacturer, or, if appropriate, the importer into the Community. It would not be necessary to show negligence, nor need the injured person have been the actual purchaser. The measure would also assist retailers, who were liable under the law of contract, by tending to channel claims for compensation towards manufacturers who introduced defects into products.

The provisions of the Community directive enabled member states to depart from the core measures in three ways: by dropping the provision which excludes liability relating to primary agricultural produce; by dropping the provision for the development risk defence; or by placing a limit on a producer's total liability. The Government proposed to do none of these things, however, and it did not appear probable that other member states would do them either. Responding to questions about the development risk defence, Mr Howard said that the Association of British Insurers was not expecting the Bill to lead to an increase in insurance costs for manufacturers; if this defence were not provided in the Bill, in fact, it would be likely that insurance cover might not be obtainable at all for certain products. He did not think that fears about situations similar to the thalidomide case were justified in connection with the Bill. The Medicines Act 1968 ensured that no medicinal product could be manufactured, sold or supplied in Britain, or be imported into it, except in accordance with the appropriate licences and clinical trial certificates as to the safety and quality of the product.

Part II of the Bill was complementary to the product liability provisions and was intended to prevent unsafe goods from reaching the market in the first place, by making it a general offence to supply unsafe consumer goods. Since it would be a defence to show that the goods conformed to an approved safety standard, the Bill would give an important boost to standards, Mr Howard said, and help to improve the quality and competitiveness of British goods.

The existing legislation on misleading price indications had been widely criticised. Under the Trades Descriptions Act 1968 traders were allowed to 'disclaim' certain requirements; and the Price Marking (Bargain Offers) Order 1979 was complex, poorly understood and difficult to enforce. Both pieces of legislation concentrated on specific practices, moreover, and allowed others to slip through the net. The Bill therefore replaced existing provisions by creating a general offence of giving misleading price indications.

Finally Mr Howard dealt with the repeal of the Trades Descriptions Act 1972. The European Commission had challenged the Act in 1986 on the grounds that its provisions on origin marking amounted to a quantitative restriction on imports between member states of the Community, which was prohibited under the Treaty of Rome. The Government had reluctantly concluded that it could not hope successfully to defend the Act before the European Court of Justice (the Community Court). It was, however, considering the scope for a successor to the Act which would be consistent with Community law; and it would not be the Government's intention to bring into force the provisions repealing the 1972 Act until a satisfactory arrangement had been made for a successor to it. Whatever regime was adopted, it would afford no lesser degree of protection to consumers than was the case elsewhere in the Community.

# Queen's Awards

**The Queen's Awards for Export and Technology for 1987 were announced on 21 April. There were 120 winners of awards for export achievement and 34 for technological achievement. The recipients represent a wide spread of industrial and commercial activity and size of company: Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and all the regions of England are represented.**

The Queen's Awards for Export and Technology are published annually on 21 April (the Queen's birthday). They are made on the advice of a committee consisting of representatives of industry and commerce as well as civil servants and trade unionists. Instituted in 1965 and revised in 1975 (see pp 443-4, 1975), the awards can be made to British companies and to subsidiaries of overseas companies. Recipients hold their awards for five years and may display the award emblem on their goods, advertising, letterheads and on articles for use by employees. A current holder of an award may apply for consideration in subsequent years in respect of a new achievement beyond that recognised by the previous award.

The 154 winners of awards in 1987 were chosen from 1,071 applicants. More awards were made than in any previous year, including 33 to companies currently holding an award.

### Export Achievement

Export achievement awards are made for 'a substantial and sustained increase in export earnings to a level which is outstanding for the products or services concerned and for the size of the applicant unit's operations'.

## Export Achievement Awards

Abekas Video Systems
The Process Systems Division of Air Products
Ajax Magnethermic (UK)
The Scunthorpe Rod Mill Division of Allied Steel and Wire
Ambassador Press
Amersham International
Anson
Apollo Fire Detectors
Ayala-Abbott and Butters
Babydiner
BEC Mobility
'Bermuda' by Espeshal
Birchwood Boat International
Bridport-Gundry
The Hatfield Unit of the Civil Aircraft Division of British Aerospace
The Prestwick Unit of the Civil Aircraft Division of British Aerospace
Buro Happold
Cambridge University Press
Camtec Ltd trading as Wild Country
Central Independent Television
Chadwyck-Healey
Claridge Mills
J Comfort and Co
Conoco
Cunard Line
Dean Warburg
Dearden Davies Associates
Domino Amjet
Dowlish Developments
Druck
The Engineering Department of Dussek Campbell
Ellison Circlips
Envelopes International
Eurocast Bar
Femcare
Ferrymasters
The Airborne Display Division of GEC Avionics
GEC Turbine Generators
GR-Stein Refractories
Gandalf Digital Communications
Gracefern Ltd trading as Oakwood Design
H + S Aviation
J M Heaford
Heat Trace
Henri-Lloyd
Hewlett-Packard
Historic House Hotels
Hozelock – ASL
Domnick Hunter Filters
The Healthcare Division of Huntleigh Technology
IAD (UK)
IBM (United Kingdom) Holdings
The Catalysts and Technology Licensing Business Group of the Chemicals and Polymers Group of ICI
IMI Radiators
L K Tool Co
Link Analytical
Lydiastar
Mabey and Johnson
Peter MacArthur & Co
Manesty Machines
Marchem
Marconi Instruments
Masterfil
Mediscus Products
Metabrasive
Mitchell Cotts Mining Equipment
The Monotype International Division of Monotype Corporation
David Nagli trading as Artistic Treasure of Richmond
Neotronics Technology
Norbrook Laboratories
Norris Biomedical (1980)
Ometron
Osprey Electronics
Oxford Instruments
Oxford Lasers
Page Aerospace
Pall Europe
Paxman Diesels
W Pearce & Co (Northampton)
Penn Fabrication
Perkin-Elmer
Pilkington Communication Systems
Pink Soda (UK)
Polymer Laboratories
R S R
The Grass Machinery Division of Ransomes Sims and Jefferies
Randall-Woolcott Services
The Really Useful Group
Renishaw Metrology
J A Robertson & Sons (Dumfries)
Roche Products
Romil Chemicals
Derek Rose Pyjamas
Ross Breeders
Royal Mint
S A C International
Self-Changing Gears
The Silver Crane Company
Solid State Logic Holdings
The Bridgend Plant of Sony (UK)
Soundtracs
Spong Manufacturing
Stannah Lifts (Domestic Products)
Strayfield International
Sunseeker International (Boats)
TI Stainless Tubes
John Tams
Thermomax
Thistle Hotels
Total Audio Concepts
Turbosound
Turners Turkeys
V G Instruments
V S W Scientific Instruments
The Vapormatic Company (Exeter)
Varn Products Co
Viking (PTI)
Vista Optics
D W Windsor
Zed Instruments

## Technological Achievement Awards

| | |
|---|---|
| A B Automotive Products | Microprocessor switching system |
| Amersham International | Isotope generator |
| Baker Perkins Bakery | Electronic dough-making process |
| BICC Data Networks | Computer connection system |
| Bonas Machine Co | Electronic pattern-maker for weaving |
| The Engineering Directorate of the British Broadcasting Corporation<br>The Working Party on Energy Management and the Radio Teleswitching Project Group of the Electricity Council | Radio teleswitching |
| British Ceramic Research | Rapid colour printing on ceramics |
| Cambrian Plastics | Electronic filament winding for fibre-reinforced plastics |
| The Detector Research Division of the Royal Signals and Radar Establishment of the Ministry of Defence<br>The Electronics Division of EEV | Thermal imaging cameras |
| The Detector Research Division of the Royal Signals and Radar Establishment of the Ministry of Defence<br>The Light Conversion Devices Division of EEV | Image intensifiers |
| The Flight Systems (Farnborough) Department of the Royal Aircraft Establishment of the Ministry of Defence<br>The Airborne Display Division, Rochester, and the Electro-Optical Surveillance Division, Basildon, of GEC Avionics | Night vision technology for aircraft |
| Dynapert Precima | Microplacement of electronic components |
| Exploration Consultants | Oil and gas reservoir simulator |
| The Printed Circuit Group of the Bracknell Division of Ferranti Computer Systems | New type of printed circuit board |
| The Engineering Division (Large Steam Turbines) of GEC Turbine Generators | Steam turbine developments |
| ICI Advanced Material Group of Imperial Chemical Industries | High temperature-resistant plastic |
| Jaguar Cars | XJ40 car |
| The Landis Lund Division of Litton UK | Computer-controlled camshaft-grinding machine |
| Nimbus Records | Manufacture of compact disc masters |
| The Plant Breeding Institute | High-yield winter wheats |
| Racal Marine Radar | Scan converter for colour radar displays |
| Racal Recorders | Calibration system for tape recorders |
| The engineering and manufacturing team for wide chord fan blades of Rolls-Royce, Derby and Barnoldswick | Fan blades for RB211–535E4 aeroengine |
| The Optical Devices Division of STC Defence Systems | Laser devices for fibre optic communications |
| Singer Link-Miles | Processing system for complex aircraft simulators |
| The Cryogenics Group of Sulzer Bros (UK) | Liquid nitrogen generators |
| Tech-Nel Data Products | Fault tolerance for computer networks |
| VG Analytical | Laminated magnets for spectrometers |
| The Wellcome Diagnostics Division of the Wellcome Foundation | Anti-AIDS test |
| Wendstone Chemicals | Production process for an intermediate stage in plastics and pharmaceuticals manufacture |

### Technological Achievement

The awards in this category are made for a 'significant advance, leading to increased efficiency, in the application of technology to a production or development process in British industry, or the production for sale of goods which incorporate new and advanced technological qualities'.

### Winners

The winners of the awards are listed below. Winners of awards for technological achievement are listed together with the development for which they received an award. Further information can be obtained from The Queen's Awards Office, Dean Bradley House, 52 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AG.

# Shorter Notes

## BRITISH-JAPANESE ACCORD ON SECURITIES REGULATION

A memorandum of understanding on the confidential exchange of supervisory and investigatory information in the securities field was signed in Tokyo on 8 April by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate and Consumer Affairs, Mr Michael Howard, and the Director General of the Securities Bureau of the Japanese Ministry of Finance, Mr Kyoji Kitamura. With the signing of similar memoranda last year between the United States and Japan and between Britain and the United States (see p 333, 1986), there are now in place arrangements between the world's three largest securities markets which will improve investor protection and enhance the ability of regulatory authorities to enforce their regimes.

The British-Japanese memorandum came into effect immediately. It covers stocks, shares and government bonds (including bond futures), but not commodity futures. It is therefore concerned with transactions on Britain's Stock Exchange and with some dealings on the London International Financial Futures Exchange (see pp 327-8, 1982). Requests for information between the two parties will be conducted on a case-by-case basis, each request being considered on its merits. In discussions leading up to the signing of the memorandum, both sides made it clear that they held the arrangements to be extremely important, even though not legally binding.

Speaking after the signing, Mr Howard said that the memorandum was a further step in the international fight against fraud, and showed the Government's determination to protect the integrity and reputation of British securities markets.

Britain intends to seek further understandings with the regulators of other major financial markets throughout the world, and hopes to begin the process soon with a number of countries whose representatives attended an informal meeting of regulators held in Britain in December 1986 (see p 25).

Source: Department of Trade and Industry press notice, 8.4.87.

## QUALITY AND STANDARDS EXPORT INITIATIVE

On 8 April the Minister for Information Technology, Mr Geoffrey Pattie, launched Resource, a new venture to co-ordinate and market overseas British expertise on standards, quality, measurement and testing. This body is the successor to a unit established in 1984 by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the British Standards Institution (BSI) to study international co-operation in quality standards and testing, which has undertaken 20 collaborative projects overseas. Resource is being funded by the DTI, and its initial staff comprises people seconded from the DTI and BSI.

Mr Pattie said 'We can justifiably claim to have established a quality infrastructure in this country which is second to none. The success of our activities has not gone unnoticed and our partners overseas have increasingly sought our help, advice, and co-operation in their own efforts to improve their economic performance.' The new service will offer experienced personnel, training, feasibility studies, technology and information in this field, especially in the food, chemicals and construction industries. Initially it will concentrate its activities on markets in the Middle East, South-East Asia and Central and South America.

Source: Department of Trade and Industry press notice, 8.4.87.

## ROADS IN ENGLAND

An additional 82 motorway and trunk road improvement schemes, with an estimated total cost of £689 million, were announced in a White Paper on roads in England, published on 28 April. Volume 1 of the White Paper sets out developments in the Government's policies for roads in England,[1] while progress in the completion of new trunk roads and planned developments are described in detail in the second volume.

The White Paper says that the objectives of building roads continue to be to assist economic growth by reducing transport costs, to improve the environment by removing through traffic (especially lorries) from unsuitable roads in towns and villages, and to enhance road safety. Funds allocated to the trunk road programme have been increased substantially, mainly because of the contribution of roads in assisting economic growth and increasing the competitiveness of industry through reduced transport costs. Although motorways and trunk roads which are the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Transport comprise only 4 per cent of the road network in England – the remainder being the responsibility of local authorities – they carry 30 per cent of road traffic and nearly 40 per cent of heavy goods traffic.

Recent developments, the White Paper notes, have included the completion of the 188-mile (117-km) M25 London Orbital Motorway (see pp 363-4, 1986). Since 1983, 108 motorway and trunk road schemes in England have been completed, representing an investment of nearly £1,500 million. The trunk road programme now comprises 34 motorway and 339 other trunk road schemes under construction and in preparation, with a total value of £5,000 million. Bypasses and relief roads account for nearly 50 per cent of schemes in the forward construction programme. Of the 82 new schemes, 21 are bypasses or relief roads, while several are designed to improve the traffic capacity of major through routes, including the widening of sections of a number of motorways.

The size of the road construction and maintenance programme makes it important to achieve maximum efficiency, and the White Paper describes a number of improvements that have been introduced, for example,

[1]Similar policy considerations apply to the construction and maintenance of trunk roads in the rest of Britain. A more detailed description of government policy, including a brief account of the most important motorways and of future major schemes, will be given in a forthcoming new edition of the COI reference paper *Britain's Motorways and Trunk Roads*, No 156/87.

the use of 'lane rental' contracts for maintenance, giving contractors a financial incentive to complete renewal schemes as quickly as possible. Most national road schemes costing more than £1 million are now designed and supervised by private consultants, and the greater use of consultants is bringing important benefits to the programme and to the firms, many of which have over 50 per cent of their work overseas. The Government is keen to encourage initiatives by the private sector for adding to the transport infrastructure whenever this is the most cost-effective way of providing the facilities concerned. One important privately financed development will be a new bridge across the Thames at Dartford (see p 364, 1986).

Source: *Policy for Roads in England: 1987*. Cm 125. Vol 1. HMSO, £3·50. ISBN 0 10 101252 7. Vol 2. HMSO, £7·50. ISBN 0 10 101253 5.

## JAMES CLERK MAXWELL TELESCOPE

On 27 April HRH the Duke of Edinburgh opened the James Clerk Maxwell telescope at the Mauna Kea observatory on the island of Hawaii. The major partner (55 per cent) in the telescope is the British Science and Engineering Research Council (SERC); the other shares are held by the Netherlands Organisation for the Advancement of Pure Research (20 per cent) and the National Research Council of Canada (25 per cent), which formally joined the British and Dutch organisations on 26 April.

The telescope is the largest in the world for observations at millimetre and sub-millimetre wavelengths, a relatively unexplored region of the electromagnetic spectrum on the border between radio waves and infra-red radiation. Its dish, which consists of 276 individual panels, is 15 m (49 ft) in diameter and accurate to better than three parts in a million. The telescope's position, 4,000 m (13,000 ft) up on the top of Mauna Kea, above the level of atmospheric water vapour, will allow it to probe the dense regions of interstellar gas, where stars are created and which cannot be penetrated by telescopes operating at other wavelengths.

The SERC's Rutherford-Appleton Laboratory, in collaboration with Cambridge University's Cavendish Laboratory, began work on the telescope in 1983 and completed the installation in June 1986. Other bodies involved included three Dutch research institutes, Queen Mary College, London, the University of Kent and the Royal Observatory, Edinburgh. The last body, which already operates an infra-red telescope on the same site, will take over the running of the James Clerk Maxwell telescope, when testing and commissioning is complete in the summer of 1987.

Sources: Science and Engineering Research Council press notices, 14.4.87 and 22.4.87.

## RADIOACTIVE WASTE DISPOSAL

The Government's decision not to proceed with the development of a separate near-surface facility for low-level radioactive waste disposal was announced in the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Mr Nicholas Ridley, on 1 May. Work on investigating the geology of four sites – Bradwell (Essex), Elstow (Bedfordshire), Fulbeck (Lincolnshire) and South Killingholme (Humberside) – had been started by the Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive (NIREX) in 1986 (see pp 98 and 298, 1986). Mr Ridley said that the latest assessment by NIREX was that, although a safe disposal facility could be developed at any of the sites, the economic advantages of a separate near-surface low-level waste disposal facility were much lower than NIREX had originally estimated. It had therefore concluded that it would be preferable to develop a multi-purpose deep site for low-level and intermediate-level waste rather than proceed further with the investigations of a near-surface facility.

Mr Ridley said that he had accepted NIREX's conclusion and it would not proceed with investigations at any of the four sites. NIREX would now concentrate on identifying a suitable location for a deep multi-purpose facility for both types of waste. It was already evaluating the relative merits of techniques of deep burial of intermediate-level waste in a repository on land, tunnelling under the seabed from the shore, and disposal into the seabed from a sea-based rig. This evaluation would be extended to cover the implications of disposing of low-level waste in such a facility.

Sources: *Hansard*, Vol 115, No 100, cols 504-12; Department of the Environment press notice, 1.5.87.

# Proposals for a National Curriculum in Schools

**Plans to establish a national curriculum in schools in England and Wales which would reflect the level of attainment and content of what is being taught in the best schools have been announced by the Government.**

Giving evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on Education, Science and Arts on 7 April the Secretary of State for Education and Science, Mr Kenneth Baker, described the Government's proposals to establish a national curriculum in schools. At present the curriculum is the responsibility of the local education authorities and the schools' governors, although in practice responsibility falls largely on head teachers and their staff. Mr Baker said that the aim of the Government and the education service was to raise standards of achievement so that every pupil was equipped with at least basic skills, knowledge and understanding to meet the challenges of adult life and employment. Pupils were entitled to a curriculum that drew upon individual talents and challenged the child. It was no longer acceptable that many children had a much less good curriculum than others through the accident of where they went to school and it was not right that objectives in the schools were not always clear.

The Government intended to legislate to establish a national curriculum brought about by the co-operative efforts of the education service, the providers and its customers. It wanted to ensure that pupils had a well-balanced foundation curriculum suitable to their abilities and aptitudes which, during the compulsory period, included not only mathematics and English, but also science, foreign languages, history, geography and technology in its various aspects. Time should be found for music, art and physical education. Religious education would be provided as at present. This list did not include essential parts of the curriculum, such as health education, which was not usually taught as a separate subject, nor did it mention choice of additional subjects at age 14-16. It did not refer to the personal qualities, attitudes and values which were required for a worthwhile and useful life.

For each subject within the foundation curriculum it would be necessary to determine clear and challenging attainment targets for the key ages of 7, 11 and 14. These targets should allow for variations in ability and should not result in an unduly narrow approach to teaching and learning. Having established these targets it would be necessary to determine and define the essential content, skills and processes of what had to be covered and taught in each subject. This approach paralleled what was now being developed for the 14-16 period through the General Certificate of Secondary Education (see p 302, 1986): the national criteria, worked out by professionals, set objectives for measuring attainment; the examining groups set detailed syllabuses and examinations approved by the Secondary Examinations Council.

Mr Baker emphasised that what was being defined would be a core that would leave ample scope for teachers to build around it, to exploit individual pupils' abilities, and to determine their own methods of teaching for the whole ability range. Teachers should have scope for exercising imagination for experiment, and for responding quickly to new challenges as they arose. But unlike at the present, all this should take place within a set framework, known to all, intelligible to all, and as far as possible acceptable to all.

Having decided the core of what should be learnt, it would be necessary to assess pupils' performance in relation to the attainment targets. But teachers would not be required to teach only what was testable, so it would be essential also to assess work done in class at the key ages. The tests and the assessments would fall to the teachers, but both would be externally moderated.

Mr Baker said he planned to appoint a number of working groups to advise on suitable attainment targets and the preparation of programmes to ensure the targets were achieved. Their reports would serve as a focus for consultation before the proposed legislation was introduced. The first groups would look at mathematics and science and would reflect the main interests within and outside the education service. Priority would be given to the primary phase which had hitherto received less attention than the secondary. He looked forward to the national discussion that would follow.

### Wales

In a parliamentary written answer on 9 April the Secretary of State for Wales said that the proposals for a national curriculum would apply to Wales and the core requirements would be the same (*Hansard*, Vol 114, No 92, written answers, cols 371-2). However, Welsh children would continue to have the opportunity to benefit from the distinctive elements of the Welsh curriculum and the Government would ensure that the national curriculum took full account of Welsh history and culture. Proper provision would also be made for those who studied through the medium of the Welsh language.

# Policies for the Advancement of Women

**A review of government policies for the advancement of women has been published in response to the Forward-Looking Strategies agreed at the World Conference in Nairobi in July 1985 which took place at the end of the United Nations Decade for Women. The review sets out the extent to which the goals and objectives of the strategies are already being met in Britain and covers such areas as matrimonial and family law, employment, health, education, industry, science and technology, social security and the criminal justice system.**

The Government believes that its policies fully comply with the spirit of the Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000 agreed by the Nairobi Conference (see pp 279-80, 1985) and indicate its total commitment to equality of opportunity between men and women. Following the Conference the Prime Minister decided there was scope for a co-ordinated review of policies and the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues was appointed to consider matters covered by the Forward-Looking Strategies. The results of its survey were published on 29 April by the Home Office.[1]

Britain ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in April 1986 and is due to present a report to the United Nations in May 1987 on the legislative, judicial, administrative or other measures that have been adopted to give effect to the Convention.

## Promoting Equality

### *Legislative Framework*

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 makes discrimination in Great Britain on grounds of sex unlawful in the fields of employment, education and training, the provision of goods, facilities and services, and in the disposal and management of premises. It applies to discrimination against either men or women on grounds of sex or marital status. The Act prohibits direct or intentional discrimination and indirect discrimination – treatment which may be described as equal in a formal sense but which is discriminatory in its effect on one sex and cannot be shown to be justified. The Act is supported by extensive enforcement provisions. Anyone who considers that he or she has been the victim of unlawful discrimination has a right of direct access to the courts or an industrial tribunal. Similar legislation exists in Northern Ireland, by virtue of the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976.

### *The Equal Opportunities Commission*

The Act established the Equal Opportunities Commission which, although financed from public funds, is an independent body with three important duties: to work towards the elimination of discrimination; to promote equality of opportunity between men and women generally; and to keep under review the working of the Act and the Equal Pay Act.

[1]*The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. A Review.* Available unpriced from the Home Office.

The Commission has power to conduct a formal investigation for any purpose connected with its statutory duties and, if in the course of an investigation, it considers that a contravention of the Sex Discrimination Act has occurred, it may issue a legally enforceable non-discrimination notice requiring the individual or organisation concerned to comply with the law. The Commission may give assistance to a complainant either by giving advice, seeking a settlement or arranging for legal advice or representation before a court or tribunal.

In addition to its role in the enforcement of the law, the Commission undertakes promotional and educational work, providing advice to employers and employees, to trade unions and professional bodies and to central and local government. It is able to make grants to other bodies or to individuals for independent research projects or educational activities or for the organisation of conferences. It also has its own research services which produce a wide range of publications each year. The Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland has similar powers and duties.

### *The Women's National Commission*

The Women's National Commission was set up in 1969 by the Government to ensure that the informed opinion of women is given its due weight in the deliberations of government. The Commission is made up of 50 representatives of national organisations with a large and active membership of women, including the women's sections of the major political parties and of the trade unions, the churches, professional and business women's organisations and other bodies broadly representative of women generally.

Over the years the Women's National Commission has communicated its views to ministers, government departments and other official bodies on a wide variety of subjects, including the law concerning prostitution, illegitimacy, and divorce; many aspects of education and training; homelessness; the elderly; taxation and other financial matters; and women and public appointments.

### *Government Contact with Voluntary Organisations*

Government ministers recognise the importance of maintaining good contacts with voluntary organisations. They are in regular communication with the Women's Organisations Interest Group of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), which is the leading voluntary agency for the maintenance and promotion of voluntary social action and works to develop co-operation between organisations and statutory authorities and to encourage international co-operation in voluntary and social service. The Home Office grant to the NCVO in 1986-87 was £889,000, representing about 40 per cent of its total income. The Department of Health and Social Security funds specific projects run by the NCVO; at present it is contributing to projects on community care and on community health initiatives.

### *Women in Public Life*

The Government is committed to extending the influence of women in advisory and policy-making bodies and ministers make every effort to ensure that a good field of candidates, including women, are considered for appointments, not on the basis of their sex but on

their qualities, abilities and experience. The representation of women on public bodies, at present about 19 per cent, does not represent the part that women can legitimately expect to play and the Government has welcomed the work done by representative organisations, most recently by the Women Into Public Life Campaign, in identifying women with the necessary qualifications and putting forward their names for public appointments. The Government has given the Women's National Commission information about appointments, including qualifications and eligibility criteria, which the Commission has taken steps to draw to the attention of women's organisations.

### Matrimonial and Family Law

A number of reforms to matrimonial and family law affecting women have been implemented in recent years. In England and Wales the Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984 (see pp 103-4, 1984) altered the time restrictions on the presentation of divorce petitions and changed the guidelines for making financial settlements on divorce. These changes were designed to give the courts further scope in dealing with the problems which arise on marital breakdown and are applied equally to both spouses. In Scotland the Law Reform (Husband and Wife) (Scotland) Act 1984 abolished certain rules that were obsolete and discriminatory. The Family Law (Scotland) Act 1985 was designed to promote greater fairness and consistency in financial provision on divorce and clarified the law on the property rights and legal capacity of married couples.

The law of divorce in England and Wales and Scotland does not discriminate between men and women in the right to divorce and questions relating to custody of children are decided in a non-discriminatory manner, recognising the importance of continued contact with both parents. In all questions concerning custody or access the paramount consideration which the courts are required to take into account is the welfare of the child. In the majority of cases the court will recognise that it is in the best interests of the child to maintain contact with both parents after separation or divorce.

The Law Reform (Parent and Child) (Scotland) Act 1986 removed or amended provisions which discriminated against illegitimate children and their parents. The Family Law Reform Bill which is at present before Parliament will implement similar changes in England and Wales.

### Employment

The Government has for many years fully recognised the important contribution which women make to the economy and has been firmly opposed to sex discrimination in employment. It believes that jobs should go to the person best able to do them regardless of sex or marital status. There has been a small but marked movement of women into some male-dominated occupations – an increase between the 1971 and 1981 censuses of 139 per cent in the number of women managers and administrators, 282 per cent of women engineers and scientists and 134 per cent of women in construction and craft occupations. The number of self-employed women has grown from 1·7 million in the 1950s to 2·4 million in 1985. Although the actual number of women in these occupations is still small there is evidence of change which is thought to be partly attributable to the success of past actions by the Government and the Equal Opportunities Commission.

Further improvement must depend largely on a continued change in attitudes of men and women generally and particularly as parents and employees and employers. The Government plans where possible to intensify action to help women overcome the handicap of past discrimination but not to impose further legislative burdens on industry which could reduce the numbers of jobs for all.

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Equal Pay Act 1970 make unlawful discrimination between men and women in employment. An employer cannot discriminate against women when recruiting, promoting or training staff nor can he pay a woman less than a man doing like work or work of equal value. A woman working part-time has a right not to be paid less *pro rata* than a full-time male employee unless the employer can show that there is a reason for the difference. The Sex Discrimination Act 1986 extended the 1975 Act to cover all employers including those with five or fewer employees and private households. It also makes it unlawful to compel a woman to retire at a different age than a comparable male employee (see p 132, 1986). Similar legislation is being prepared for Northern Ireland.

In 1985 the Equal Opportunities Commission published, following approval by Parliament, its Code of Practice on the elimination of sex and marriage discrimination in employment and the promotion of equality of opportunity. The Code is supported by the Government and has received wide distribution and extensive press coverage. It is regarded as a useful force for mobilising public awareness.

An Advisory Committee on Women's Employment advises the Department of Employment on questions of employment policy relating to women. At present the committee has 21 members of whom 17 are women and includes people from industry, education, politics and other spheres of public life.

#### *Training and Occupational Mobility*

The Government, through the Manpower Services Commission (MSC), provides a variety of training courses to help women get back into the labour market after time at home looking after their families, and to help girls and women to move into previously male-dominated jobs, including management and science and engineering. Since 1975 the MSC has made equal opportunity an area of special priority. All MSC training courses are open to women. A number are run for women returning to the labour market or for women entering non-traditional jobs.

The MSC has initiated in England and Wales a programme of positive action aimed at expanding the opportunities for women to train across a broader range of occupations and skills at a wider range of levels. It also aims to improve the training provided for girls and women in occupations in which they predominate in order to improve their career opportunities and to provide training to compensate for any lack of educational opportunities they might have experienced in the past.

The Youth Training Scheme (see p 62) has greatly increased the opportunities girls have to obtain vocational qualifications and a number of single-sex schemes or schemes with reserved places for girls are

being developed. 'Wider opportunities for women' courses, aimed at women returning to work after bringing up a family, are designed to update skills and job-hunting techniques, to help rebuild lost confidence, and to encourage women to take up jobs in new areas such as the new technologies and management.

Scotland is broadly in line with the rest of Britain on measures to encourage the employment and training of women. In addition to the wider opportunities for women courses, Open Learning secretarial courses are provided and women make up the vast majority of participants. Open Learning enables women to work at their own pace, based in their homes, and has proved to be a very successful method of training.

In the Youth Training Scheme in Scotland single-sex schemes and reserved places schemes which are intended for the opposite sex from that which predominates in a particular industry or occupation (for example, engineering for girls and community care for boys) have been moderately successful.

Through its WISE initiative (Women into Science and Engineering) the Equal Opportunities Commission is campaigning for girls and women to consider openings in science and engineering – areas where women are traditionally under-represented. The Government fully supports this initiative and the Department of Trade and Industry has helped fund the WISE bus which tours the country providing teachers and schoolgirls with the opportunity to gain knowledge of current technology and what is involved in an engineering career.

In Northern Ireland all training courses mounted by the Department of Economic Development are open to women.

*Working Conditions*

Every employer in Britain has a general duty to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees. Health and safety legislation applies equally to men and women except for a few areas where there is special protection for women (for example, in some processes working with lead which could harm an unborn child).

The Sex Discrimination Act 1986 amended the Factories Act 1961 to permit women to work the same hours as men and thus to have access to higher paid shift working and a wider range of jobs.

*Employment Opportunities*

Organisation of working time is primarily a matter for negotiation between employers and employees. The Government welcomes the development of more flexible working patterns which encourage greater efficiency and competitiveness, and help people to combine work and family commitments. Flexibility is encouraged through measures such as Jobshare which helps employers create part-time work at all levels. Many women prefer part-time work which enables them to combine paid work with family responsibilities.

The Forward-Looking Strategies recommend that tax structures should be revised so that the tax liability on the combined earnings of married couples does not constitute a disincentive to women's employment. Under Britain's present tax system a married couple is taxed as a single unit, but a tax allowance is available against the wife's earnings. The Government's Green Paper *The Reform of Personal Taxation*, published in 1986 (see pp 126-8, 1986), outlined a system of independent taxation for husbands and wives with transferable allowances. Married people would each have a tax allowance in their own right to set against their income (both earned and investment) with an option to transfer any unused balance to their partner. The Government considers, however, that the response to the Green Paper indicated that there was insufficient support for its proposals at this stage. It will be looking at the matter further, however, and exploring whether there is a satisfactory 'half-way house' to the Green Paper's proposals.

*Sexual Harassment*

The Sex Discrimination Act provides redress for women who suffer as a result of sexual harassment at work. The Government welcomes action by the Equal Opportunities Commission, employers and unions to prevent sexual harassment at work. The Commission's Code of Practice also addresses this issue.

*Maternity Provisions*

The Government believes that any extension of maternity provisions (which are already more generous than in many other countries) would add to employers' costs and could therefore affect their competitiveness, their willingness to recruit and promote young women and the total level of employment they could offer. At present, when the primary aim must be to reduce unemployment, any addition to employers' costs must be given serious consideration. The compulsory introduction of parental leave would also damage competitiveness, undermine job prospects and ultimately be detrimental to the welfare of working parents and their children. The Government recognises that there is a range of measures – including flexible working time, personal leave arrangements and workplace child-care facilities – which can be of help to working parents in reconciling career and family responsibilities, and it commends to employers the advice on these matters contained in the Equal Opportunities Commission's Code of Practice.

*Unemployment*

Britain has a lower unemployment rate for women than for men. Unemployment estimates from the 1985 Labour Force Survey give a female unemployment rate of 10 per cent (as a percentage of the economically active population) in the spring of 1985 compared with the male rate of 11 per cent. Female unemployment is now falling at a faster rate than male unemployment.

The Government could not support action aimed solely at reducing female unemployment and considers the need is to reduce unemployment for all.

*The Government as Employer*

The Government believes that all eligible persons should have equal opportunity for employment and advancement in the Civil Service on the basis of their ability and qualifications and fitness for the work. Equal opportunity officers are designated in each department to monitor progress and help foster the development of sound practice. The Treasury publishes an annual report on Civil Service manpower, including statistics on the numbers of women employed at different grades. Action has been taken

to identify the obstacles to faster progress of women to senior levels within the Civil Service and a programme of action covering 70 specific recommendations is being implemented throughout departments. This includes measures designed to enable more women with domestic responsibilities to maintain the continuity of a working career, for example, by means of flexible working hours, part-time working and special leave.

## Health

Health care in Britain is comprehensive and available to all regardless of sex, age or nationality. Services are provided to meet the specific needs of women throughout their lives. One of the ministers in the Department of Health and Social Security has special responsibility for women's health.

The National Health Service has been an equal opportunity employer since 1976 and special opportunities exist for the employment of women nurses and doctors who have family commitments. In appointing members of health authorities and family practitioner committees, particular care is taken to ensure that the age, sex, occupational and geographical composition of the membership as a whole is representative of the communities served.

There are a number of specific measures which are beneficial to doctors with domestic commitments and the arrangements encourage women to aspire to top posts. In training, for example, there are arrangements to ensure that part-time senior registrar posts are available throughout the country. In England and Wales between 8 and 9 per cent of all senior registrar posts are part-time posts; in Scotland health boards are asked to fill a minimum of 3 per cent of posts by part-time trainees.

For the other training grades, health authorities and health boards have been asked to develop further part-time posts for doctors with domestic commitments and to give urgent attention to requests by doctors holding full-time posts who want to convert to part-time work because of domestic reasons.

The Doctors Retainer Scheme allows doctors who are temporarily unable to practise medicine because of domestic commitments to remain in touch with medical activity and continue training in order to return eventually to substantial practice once their commitments become lighter. The scheme is open to both men and women doctors; most of those taking advantage of it are women.

Health authorities and health boards have been encouraged to fill consultant posts with part-time appointees and to plan for an increasing proportion of medical staff to be working part-time.

### *Health Education*

The main government agency for the promotion of health education is the Health Education Authority, which replaced the Health Education Council on 1 April 1987. It will continue to promote programmes designed to motivate women towards good health practices.

### *Women and Smoking*

Smoking is a major cause of preventable illness and death in Britain. Mortality from lung cancer among women has been rising over recent years and so specific measures aimed at women smokers have been taken. In 1985, £500,000 was made available to the Health Education Council for a television campaign to discourage women from smoking and in 1986 the Council produced a new booklet on women and smoking. The latest voluntary agreement on tobacco advertising and promotion (see pp 131-2, 1986) prohibits advertising in magazines where a third or more of the readers are young women. One of the six new health warnings draws attention to the damage smoking during pregnancy can do to an unborn baby.

### *Immunisation*

Britain has a comprehensive immunisation programme which is fully in accordance with the principles laid down by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Government hopes to achieve the WHO immunisation targets on childhood diseases by 1990. Campaigns have been undertaken on the promotion of vaccination, in particular against whooping cough and measles, a video on the vaccination of adult women against rubella was released in 1986 and another, specifically aimed at Asian women, was launched in January 1987.

### *Nutrition*

Advice on diet for pregnant women and nursing mothers is provided by the Health Education Authority. The Department of Health and Social Security commissioned a survey into the diet of schoolchildren in 1983. Data were collected separately on boys and girls in order that problems specific to either sex could be identified: a preliminary report was published in April 1986. A comprehensive system of antenatal and postnatal advice and treatment is available from general medical practitioners, community nurses, health visitors and the hospital service. Advice is provided on the nutrition of both mothers and babies.

The World Health Organisation International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes has been implemented in Britain by means of a voluntary code of practice adopted by the manufacturers and a complementary government circular to health staff. The Forward-Looking Strategies underline the need for clean water; all people in Britain have access to clean water supplies.

### *Access to Care*

There are well-developed family practitioner and community health services throughout Britain, including remote rural areas. These are accessible to women and men alike and provide advice and treatment on maternal and child-care problems and family planning. Maternal mortality has fallen to a low level, but all such deaths are the subject of detailed investigation by health departments. The need to ensure effective screening for cervical cancer is considered a priority. In February 1987 a national breast cancer screening service for women aged 50 to 64 was announced (see p 109). The Health Education Advisory Committee for Wales has set up a working group to consider the health education aspects of cancer screening.

### *Family Planning*

Family planning provision recognises that women should be able to plan their families responsibly and have access to safe contraception. Advice and treatment on family planning are provided free of charge.

*Occupational Health*

The Government has for many years been concerned about the occupational health of the population and significant improvements in working conditions have been achieved. Pregnant women are, subject to conditions already laid down in legislation, entitled to employment protection, maternity leave and certain social security benefits.

*Women and Disabilities*

The Government is committed to work for improvements in services and opportunities for disabled men and women, guided by the principles set out in the World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons. This is intended to take the form of development and refinement of what is already a relatively sophisticated network of support services.

The health boards and local authority social work departments provide a comprehensive health and social service for people with a physical or sensory disability.

Disabled people are supplied with aids and appliances which are maintained and replaced free of charge. These include necessary aids to daily living (as distinct from those for the management of an illness), primarily aimed at giving greater independence to the disabled person in the home.

Responsibility for the provision of community-based occupational and social rehabilitation measures, and support services to assist physically and mentally disabled people in the home environment and in many other aspects of life, rests with the local authorities who have a duty under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 to make arrangements to provide a range of practical services to disabled people. Central government grants are made to voluntary organisations working in the field of physical and mental disability.

*The Role of the Voluntary Sector in Women's Health*

The importance of the voluntary sector's contribution to women's health is recognised and the Government funds several organisations which devote themselves exclusively to women's health issues such as the Women's National Cancer Control Campaign and Women's Health Concern. Funding is also provided for a number of voluntary bodies that include women's health in their range of interests.

## Education

The Government's central aims for education are to raise standards at all levels and to secure the best possible return from the resources available; these aims apply equally to both sexes. The Secretary of State for Education and Science has expressed the view that he would like to see more women represented in the higher ranks of the teaching profession and has stated that local education authorities must not discriminate against women in competition for senior posts.

Girls are well catered for by the school education system and evidence shows that they stay at school beyond the minimum leaving age and achieve qualifications in greater numbers than boys.

*Curriculum*

The Government has issued guidelines to ensure that all pupils receive a balanced curriculum relevant to the needs of the modern world and one of the aims is to ensure that girls do not limit their career prospects, for example, by dropping out of science, mathematics and technology too early in their school career. It is intended that science education in schools should offer equal opportunities to both boys and girls. The Government has advised that teachers need to pay particular attention to the needs of girls, many of whom find science subjects unappealing or intimidating. There is some evidence that more girls are achieving success in science examinations.

The general criteria for the new General Certificate of Secondary Education examinations in England and Wales (see p 302, 1986) stipulate that every effort should be made to ensure that syllabuses and examinations are free of gender and other forms of bias.

Women's studies is not generally taught as a separate subject in schools. However, certain social studies subjects offer syllabus areas such as 'changing society' which provide the opportunity for teachers to discuss the changing role of women. Craft, design and technology and home economics are equally open to girls and boys and do not distinguish between the kinds of practical work they do.

The Government is committed to identifying women who are able and willing to serve on national bodies concerned with curriculum and examinations.

*Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI)*

An increasing number of secondary school pupils aged 14 to 18 are participating in the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative which is sponsored by the Manpower Services Commission (see pp 231-2, 1986). One of the criteria for the programme is that it should offer equal opportunities to both boys and girls. Linked to TVEI, an equal opportunities network has been set up in Scotland bringing together representatives from all the Scottish TVEI projects to gather information on equal opportunities, to monitor progress and to give appropriate advice.

*Careers Advice*

Officers from the Careers Service (the employment service for the young) do all they can to encourage young people to broaden their occupational choices and give positive counselling and careers advice to make girls aware of the range of opportunities in scientific, technical and managerial fields. The Government has given strong support to a wide range of initiatives designed to do this, such as the Women's Training Roadshow programme and the SWITCH year (Scottish Women into the Computing Habit). The Government is also funding the appointment of a schools/engineering co-ordinator whose task is to work closely with the careers advisory service in Scotland and present engineering as a career in which there are interests and opportunities for women.

*Teachers*

The Government recognises the crucial role played by teachers in schools and colleges, particularly subject and career teachers, in combating sex stereotyping. Courses of initial teacher training must include gender issues and prepare students to guard against preconceptions based on a pupil's sex. The Government has issued advice that particular attention should be given to the expectations and attitudes of girls when reaching decisions on style and methods of teaching, curriculum content and timetabling.

*City Technology Colleges*

The creation of a network of City Technology Colleges in urban areas in England (see p 369, 1986) will provide a broad-based secondary education with a strong technical and practical element. One of the objects is to offer balanced provision for both sexes.

*Further and Higher Education*

In further and higher education the Government's priorities are to improve the guidance and information about opportunities that are available to women and to encourage more flexible courses. Among a number of information services is the Educational Counselling and Credit Transfer Information Service which disseminates information about how past qualifications can be credited towards new qualifications and is useful for women resuming studies after a career break. More generally, continuing education is encouraged, both part-time and by such means as open and distance learning which is of particular benefit to women with domestic responsibilities. The additional student places created in a number of shortage subjects, for example, in engineering and technology, also increase opportunities for suitably qualified girls.

*Non-advanced Further Education*

Non-advanced further education in England and Wales includes courses in general education, pre-vocational education, vocational training, remedial education and adult education, all of which are open to candidates of both sexes. In 1985 women outnumbered men on both full-time and part-time courses. In 1985 the Further Education Unit, an independent body set up to promote efficient provision of further education, drew attention to a number of shortcomings in curricula and programmes from the equal opportunities point of view and in 1986 the Business and Technician Education Council – one of the main validating bodies – urged institutions to examine their policies and procedures to ensure that they were fair in relation to gender, race and religion. Changes to further education courses in Scotland have introduced new systems which provide greater flexibility for training or retraining on a full- or part-time basis. The programme is particularly suitable for mature students and takes account of the skills needed by industry and commerce.

*Adult Education*

Women account for about two-thirds of enrolments in adult education. Much of the provision is leisure-orientated but providers, including the Workers' Education Association and university extramural departments, as well as local authorities, are becoming increasingly interested in developing courses offering adults a second chance, for example access courses which prepare students for higher education, including initial teacher-training courses. Such courses are attractive to women although they are open to both sexes. Within this range of provision, many courses – often financed by the Manpower Services Commission – are intended specifically for women contemplating a return to the labour market. In England and Wales the REPLAN programme is improving the range of educational opportunities available to unemployed adults, and has given some specific attention to the needs of women.

In Scotland grant aid is provided towards the administrative costs of a number of voluntary organisations which include within their aims the provision of educational activities specifically for women. These include Scottish Women's Rural Institutes which provide educational and cultural activities for women in rural areas and the Workers' Education Association which makes special tuition for women a major objective.

*Nursery and Pre-school Education*

The Government recognises that the extent to which women with young children may take advantage of opportunities to continue and broaden their own education can sometimes depend on the availability of facilities for the care of their children. Education provision for those under compulsory school age is discretionary and it is for the local education authorities to assess and respond to the need in particular areas. At present some 43 per cent of all three- and four-year-olds are in nursery or primary classes, compared with 37 per cent in 1979. Overall, including those approaching five, some 80 per cent of all children are in school before they reach compulsory school age.

The Government also recognises the value and importance of the largely voluntary playgroup movement which currently provides for something like half of all three- and four-year-olds. It has recently announced increased funding at national level to enhance the educational content of playgroups.

## Agriculture and Food

Women make an important contribution to the food and agriculture industry. Mechanisation and improved working methods have encouraged female labour although the workforce ratio at present is still 4:1 in favour of males. While there is some evidence that women working in agriculture may receive less pay than men there is no discrimination in the statutory minimum wages. In law there is no discrimination against women owning, inheriting or managing agricultural land.

*Training and Advice*

There is no discrimination against women in training run by the Agricultural Training Board for England and Wales and other training organisations; the training board has recently taken a decision to try to promote special courses for women in agriculture.

Training for women in agriculture recognises the fact that wives play an important role in running the family farm, often assuming responsibility for bookkeeping, cash flow projections and mini-computer applications. Women also act as trainers in the field and instruct apprentices. The Government hopes to extend the training board's remit to allow training in activities connected with the diversification of agricultural businesses including the development of land and animal husbandry for recreational purposes. This would be particularly helpful to women.

Because of the reduction of job opportunities in agriculture the Ministry's advisory service gives advice where appropriate about diversification in rural areas, for example, into recreation and tourism activities in which women tend to become heavily involved. Where a demand for training arises courses are set up in local educational establishments.

### Industry, Trade and Commerce

In addition to the measures taken in employment and education, a number of initiatives have been taken to encourage girls and young women to pursue non-traditional careers in industry, particularly in management, engineering and information technology. Under a scheme of 'executive shadows' fifth- and sixth-year students shadowed business executives at work for a period in 1986. The scheme was started for girls and business women but was later expanded to men and boys. 'Challenge of management' courses run by the Industrial Society and supported by the Department of Trade and Industry give sixth-form schoolgirls an insight into industrial management. Under a 'Mini-Enterprise in Schools' project secondary and middle schools are encouraged to set up business enterprises. The Department of Trade and Industry makes available to schools a series of videos on women and engineering, information technology and related issues. As part of the SWITCH campaign in Scotland (see p 173) an 'insight into computing' course has been funded to provide schoolgirls with knowledge of computing courses and careers. Under the engineering and technology programme the Department of Trade and Industry has contributed £43 million to provide some 5,000 extra higher education places in England and Wales for science and engineering subjects by 1990 (see p 141, 1985). Included in the programme are courses to help women gain qualifications which better equip them for careers in areas traditionally dominated by men. In Scotland £14 million has been allocated under a separate programme to increase the output of engineers and technologists from higher education institutions by 300 a year by 1990.

### Science and Technology

The information technology skills shortage committee set up under Department of Trade and Industry chairmanship drew attention to women's potential in the information technology industry at a time of growing skills shortages and declining school and university populations. It called on companies to tailor their recruitment and career structures to encourage women to make their careers in information technology. The IT Skills Agency, set up by industry in response to the committee's call for a new partnership between industry and education, will be examining the subject of career structures. The Government considers that it is important for other sectors affected by skills shortages to adopt a similar approach.

The Government is generally keen to encourage flexibility in the working patterns of women and in this context welcomes the Engineering Council's report 'Career Breaks for Women – Chartered and Technician Engineers', which calls for employers to make arrangements for a break in women's employment to enable them to have a family.

In partnership with the Scottish Council (Development and Industry), the Industry Department for Scotland and the Scottish Education Department have jointly funded the appointment of a schools/industry engineering co-ordinator who will have the task of increasing the advice available to pupils about the opportunities for careers in engineering and technology programmes. The co-ordinator has specific responsibility for interesting more schoolgirls in careers in engineering and technology.

The British National Space Centre has a good representation of women at senior administrative levels. The centre is conscious of the need to involve women in the peaceful uses of space.

### Communications

The Forward-Looking Strategies express concern about the relationship of women to the media under two main heads: participation of women in the media; and stereotyping of women by the media and by advertising. The Government's policy towards the media is that while it does not interfere in the day-to-day activities of media organisations, it wishes to provide opportunities for the development of new forms of mass media, particularly in broadcasting, in order to widen competition and consumer choice. In addition, it has asked the established broadcasters to secure greater participation of independent producers in their television services. The Government believes that these policies will have an important incidental effect in breaking down traditional patterns of employment and participation, and opening up new opportunities for involvement by women.

#### *Participation of Women*

Broadcasters and newspaper publishers are subject to the general law, including the Sex Discrimination Act, which applies to employment opportunities for both men and women. There is a very significant involvement by women in broadcasting and journalism, and this has grown in recent years. There are a significant number of women in senior positions in broadcasting companies. The Government also has direct control over appointments to the governing boards of the broadcasting authorities, and has ensured that women are represented.

#### *Portrayal of Women*

So far as the portrayal of women is concerned, the media reflect the patterns and attitudes of society. However, the greater range and diversity of programming should assist in providing opportunities for the portrayal of women in non-traditional roles and contexts, and this in turn should assist in breaking down stereotypes.

### Housing

In general, the Government's housing policies do not treat women and men differently. However, where specific measures for women are needed these are taken. For example, the homelessness legislation places a statutory duty on local authorities to provide accommodation for certain priority categories including pregnant women and single-parent households. Another example is the provision of accommodation under the Government's hostels initiative for women who have been subjected to physical violence from their partners.

Other policies which are of particular benefit to women include the establishment in 1985 of a new unit called Estate Action to devise, in conjunction with local authorities, imaginative solutions to tackle the problems of rundown council estates. The unit has a budget of £50 million for 1986-87, rising to £75 million for 1987-88. A key element of this initiative is the importance placed on consulting tenants about their housing needs. Many of the improvements being carried out, such as improved lighting of communal

areas, and blocking off unnecessary walkways, have been designed with the security of women in mind.

The Urban Programme encourages local authorities to develop a co-ordinated approach to tackle the problems of inner cities and other areas of urban deprivation and helps fund a wide range of projects on economic, environmental, social and housing issues. Many projects improve the circumstances of women.

It has become increasingly apparent that the traditional image of the household headed by a man is no longer necessarily the true picture; for example, research work being undertaken in Scotland on the assessment of housing needs shows that the number of households headed by women is projected to increase by 26 per cent between 1983 and 1996, compared with an increase of only 2 per cent in households headed by men. The largest proportionate increases are likely to be among women aged between 30 and 44.

Recent trends in household formation which have resulted in an increasing focus on the housing needs of women are: the growth in the number of single-person households; the increasing number of new households formed as a consequence of marital breakdown; the growth in the number of single-parent families; and the increasing size of the elderly population which, because of differing mortality rates, contains a substantial majority of women.

## Social Security and Social Services

Since its inception in 1948 social security has provided for equality between single men and women, and has also included many areas of protection for married women in order to safeguard their financial position. Over recent years provision has been systematically reviewed to take account of the changing role of women and their increased need for independent status. Because the system is insurance-based and rights are built up over time, it is not possible to eradicate immediately differences in entitlement which derive from earlier attitudes to the economic and social position of women. The present system is thus in a state of transition.

### *Equality of Access to Social Security Benefits*

The social security system now provides almost complete equality of access to the contributory, non-contributory and means-tested benefits. The major exceptions to this rule are pension age, where the present differential favours women; survivors' benefits, where again women are the beneficiaries but can only in limited circumstances pass rights to their husbands; and the existence of the married women's pension, worth 60 per cent of that of the husband, which can be received by a married woman in her own right but on the basis of her husband's contributions. A woman can pass no such parallel right to her husband. Because so many married women took advantage of the option (no longer available) to pay a reduced rate insurance contribution which carried no pension rights, or paid no contributions at all, a high proportion of women above and below pension age have little or no pension title on their own contributions and rely on their husband's contributions for their pensions. The position will be different for women who have spent the bulk of their working lives since 1978, when the reduced-rate contribution option was abolished. The continued existence of the married woman's pension will however be necessary for many years to come to protect those whose personal entitlement is affected by the earlier provisions.

With the exception of the areas mentioned above and some minor issues, equality of access to social security benefits is legally required under the terms of European Community Directives on equal treatment between men and women in social security and in occupational social security.

In the contributory and non-contributory social security benefits, entitlement depends generally on contribution history or on the satisfaction of certain criteria such as degree of loss of faculty, rather than on sex. In the means-tested benefits, entitlement depends on the resources of the household unit as well as on other conditions, and for this purpose the incomes of both partners of a married or unmarried couple are aggregated. Until 1983 only the male member of a couple could make a claim for supplementary benefit, even though the female member's resources were taken into account in assessing his entitlement. Since November 1983, supplementary benefit has been available to either partner of a married or unmarried couple who could satisfy certain entitlement conditions. Under the new income support scheme, which will replace supplementary benefit in 1988, partners will be able to decide which of them should claim.

### *Individualisation of Social Insurance*

The Forward-Looking Strategies call for long-term policies directed towards providing social insurance for women in their own right. The Government is committed to this principle. Moreover, the present system recognises the independent status of women, who are beneficiaries in their own right rather than merely as dependants of their husbands. Over the last few years there have been some notable developments in pension provision, which will assist women to build up pension rights of their own, including arrangements to protect entitlement to basic retirement pension for those who have been prevented from working because of domestic responsibilities.

### *Support for Women as Parents and Lone Parents*

The Forward-Looking Strategies urge governments to ensure a level of social and economic support for female lone parents that will enable them to achieve independence. A number of measures in the social security field should give simpler assistance when a child is born and should help parents both in one- and two-parent families.

### *Maternity Benefit*

New arrangements for maternity pay were introduced in April 1987 to rationalise the existing schemes. Payments are available for up to 18 weeks during which a woman is away from work and are payable in addition to widow's benefit to a woman widowed during pregnancy or shortly after childbirth.

### *Child Benefit*

Child benefit is available to all, is not means tested, is tax free and is payable directly to mothers. One-parent benefit is paid to all lone parents, 90 per cent of whom are women. Widows receive instead a child dependency allowance.

*Family Income Supplement*

Family income supplement is a benefit for low-income working families with children, and entitlement depends upon one of the adults being in full-time work. Before November 1983, only the man of a couple could satisfy the full-time work condition but since that date the woman has been able to claim the benefit on behalf of her family in exactly the same way as a man.

*Family Credit*

Family credit is a new benefit for low-income working families, which will replace family income supplement in 1988 and will provide better help for such families. The credit will be paid direct to the recipient, normally the woman. There will be special help for lone parents who will receive the same adult credit as couples.

*Supplementary Benefit/Income Support*

Existing special provision for lone parents in the means-tested supplementary benefit scheme will continue when the benefit is replaced by income support in 1988. At present, lone parents are eligible for the higher long-term rate of supplementary benefit if they have been on benefit for a year, and a higher earnings disregard applies to them if they are in work. In the new income support scheme, lone parents will receive a premium on top of the personal allowance and family premium; all lone parents over 18 will receive the over-25 rate of personal allowance; and there will be a higher earnings disregard for those lone parents who do part-time work.

*Women as Carers*

Following a ruling in the European Court in June 1986, the 1986 Social Security Act was introduced to make provision for invalid care allowance to be awarded to married women on the same basis as single women and men.

*Severe Disablement Allowance*

Severe disablement allowance is available equally to men and women regardless of marital status and did away with the much-disliked test which married women previously had to satisfy before being awarded an invalidity pension – that they were not capable of carrying out household duties.

*Personal Social Services and Social Work Services*

Social services (including support and assistance for abused women and children) are a statutory function of local authorities. In addition to the various services provided by these authorities, central government offers financial assistance to voluntary bodies working in related fields.

Legislation makes provision for the care and protection of children who may have been abused or may be at risk from abuse. The voluntary sector plays an important part in the prevention and handling of cases of child abuse. The Government is particularly aware of the need to raise awareness in the community about the problem of child sexual abuse and the need to prevent it. To this end it has contributed funding towards the costs of two voluntary telephone helplines and further funding is being made available over a three-year period to provide extra training facilities for professional staff working on the treatment of children and young people who have suffered abuse.

The Government is committed to a strategy of care in the community, a priority element of which is to enable elderly people, with appropriate support and assistance, to enjoy as full and as active a life as possible in their own homes. Local authorities are responsible for a wide range of domiciliary services including day care, home helps, meals on wheels and laundry facilities, together with other forms of assistance such as concessionary travel and aids or adaptations to the home. Many services are supplemented by an active and innovative voluntary sector partly financed through grants from central and local government. Initiatives being taken in these services have a particular significance for women in view of their predominance in providing informal care.

*Day Care Services for Children Under Five*

There is no statutory right to day care services for the under-fives but local authorities have a discretionary power to provide them where appropriate. Long-standing government policy is that public provision of day care should be concentrated on those whose need for it is greatest because of a particular disadvantage. It is for individual local authorities to assess the level and type of provision necessary to meet priority cases and to involve social services, education and the voluntary sector in the co-ordination of services.

## Women and the Criminal Justice System

*Police Recruitment and Training*

Women have equal opportunities for appointment to the police service and all recruits must satisfy standard entry requirements and undergo the same initial training. Women officers are deployed on the full range of police duties. Further specialised training is related to the duties on which the officer may be employed and, within individual police forces, women officers may receive specialised training in subjects such as domestic violence, child abuse and sexual assault. The recruitment and career development of women within individual police forces are regularly monitored.

*Custodial Establishments*

Male and female custodial establishments in England and Wales operate in general under the same policies and statutory rules. There are, however, exceptions which reflect female inmates' special needs. The provision of specialist accommodation and staff to look after pregnant women and babies is one example.

*Violence Against Women*

There is a comprehensive body of law on sexual offences. Penalties for attempted rape and indecent assault against a woman have recently been substantially increased. Guidance given by the Home Office to chief constables in England and Wales on the investigation of rape offences stresses the need for sensitivity and tact in the treatment of victims and encourages chief constables to keep training needs under constant review. A circular issued in October 1986 in response to the Women's National Commission's report on violence against women gives guidance on the treatment of rape and domestic violence. The Home Office is also preparing a leaflet containing practical advice for women on how best to avoid and if necessary deal with violence.

Legislation relating to domestic violence provides injunctive relief, personal protection orders, or exclusive orders to deal with this problem. In Scotland, the Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981 strengthened the law on matrimonial interdicts and made new provision in relation to the rights of occupancy of spouses in a matrimonial home. Revised guidelines to the police in Scotland about the provisions of the Act stress, among other things, that the safety of the aggrieved woman and her family should be of paramount concern to the police.

Compensation is available from public funds for the victims of violent crime. Practical advice and emotional support is provided by victim support schemes and rape crisis centres. These voluntary schemes receive financial assistance from central government under a variety of programmes. In particular, the Home Office recently made financial provision of £9 million over the next three years to fund the salary costs of full-time co-ordinators for victim support schemes.

*Prostitution*

Under the Sexual Offences Act 1956, it is an offence in England and Wales for a man knowingly to live wholly or in part on the earnings of prostitution, and it is an offence for a woman for purposes of gain to exercise control, direction or influence over a prostitute's movements in a way which shows she is aiding, abetting or compelling her prostitution. It is also an offence to procure a woman to become a common prostitute in any part of the world.

In a report published in December 1985 the Criminal Law Revision Committee recommended that the existing offences relating to living on the earnings of prostitution and the keeping and managing of brothels should be repealed and replaced by new schemes of offences. The Committee also recommended that the law on procuring a woman to become a prostitute should be retained largely in its present form. The Home Office is considering these recommendations.

The Sexual Offences Act 1985 makes 'kerbcrawling' a specific offence (see p 255, 1985): it is an offence for a man to solicit a woman for the purpose of prostitution from or near a motor vehicle if he does so persistently or in a manner likely to cause annoyance to the woman solicited or nuisance to other people in the neighbourhood. It is also an offence for a man on foot persistently to solicit a woman in a street or public place. Thus, for the first time under English law, male clients of female prostitutes are liable to prosecution in certain circumstances.

*Pornography*

A number of measures have been introduced to tighten up the law relating to pornography. These are: the Indecent Displays (Control) Act 1981, which prohibits the display of indecent material in a public place or where it can be seen from a public place; the Cinematography (Amendment) Act 1982, now subsumed in the Cinema Act 1985, which brought bogus cinema clubs within the scope of the licensing arrangements for cinemas; the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, which contains provisions enabling local authorities in England and Wales to control the number and location of sex shops in their area by means of a licensing scheme; the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 which provides for the control of sex shops and the display of obscene material; and the Video Recordings Act 1984, which prohibits the supply, offer to supply or possession for supply of unclassified material in video form. Ministers have indicated that they will continue to keep the law in this area under close review and will consider further legislation if this seems desirable.

**International Co-operation**

The Overseas Development Administration (ODA) assesses the likely impact on women of proposals for using British aid funds. Such appraisals examine the position of women as both agents and beneficiaries of change and development. By integrating the consideration of the role of women into the social and economic assessment of new projects the ODA ensures that these issues remain central. For the same reasons the ODA places the key responsibility for ensuring that full account is taken of the position of women on its Social Development Advisers and other professional advisers involved in all project work rather than in a special women's unit.

The Forward-Looking Strategies see training as a key issue in helping women at least to reach the same starting-point as men. At present about 15 per cent of the people brought to Britain through the aid programme for training are women. The ODA's aim is to see more women being trained under the aid programme – not simply on courses conventionally thought to be for women but on all courses. The ODA is making recipient governments aware of its view that more women should be nominated for training awards.

The involvement of women's groups in shaping and implementing change in developing countries needs to be increased. Existing local women's groups are contacted to work with ODA projects. Where women's groups do not exist or existing ones need strengthening, support is considered to establish or strengthen them.

British non-governmental organisations are working in co-operation with similar organisations overseas and are very effective in reaching the poorest people, including women, and sometimes especially women. The ODA supports this work under its Joint Funding Scheme by contributing half the costs (see p 158).

The ODA has always supported the UN Development Fund for Women, which finances small-scale development projects of direct benefit to women in the least-developed countries. The ODA has contributed £750,000 since the Fund began in 1975. It is hoped that the British contribution will help the Fund in its catalytic role and in particular help to ensure that UN funds take appropriate account of women's interests.

## Inner Cities

**The Government has announced further support for the regeneration of Britain's inner cities. An extra £10 million is to be spent in 1987-88 in setting up eight new inner city 'task forces' and in funding the five 'city action teams'.**

Announcing new financial support for certain inner city regeneration schemes, the Paymaster General and

Minister for Employment, Mr Kenneth Clarke, gave an account (*Hansard*, Vol 115, No 96, cols 31-40) of government initiatives launched over the past two years to co-ordinate and concentrate the resources of several government departments, and to involve local communities and the private sector – backed by government action – in the task of urban regeneration.

Referring to the setting up of the Inner Cities Initiative in February 1986 (see pp 101-2, 1986) as an experimental programme, Mr Clarke said that the initiative had already shown what could be achieved by a partnership between the public and private sectors with the active involvement of local people. It had demonstrated how the Government, by operating at a local level, could give a lead by pulling together the efforts of all those involved in inner city regeneration. He had therefore decided to expand coverage of the initiative to other towns and cities and would be setting up and funding a further eight task forces to supplement the original eight (see p 102, 1986). These would be in parts of Coventry, Doncaster, Hartlepool, Nottingham, Rochdale, Preston, Wolverhampton and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The funding for task forces would be increased to £14 million in 1987-88, said Mr Clarke, to top up existing programmes and support new ideas for stimulating employment and enterprise. [The £14 million comprises £8 million of planned expenditure and £6 million of new funds.]

The Government also proposed to carry forward the work of the five City Action Teams set up in 1985 (see p 102, 1986). Experience with these, continued Mr Clarke, had shown that the teams could use money very effectively, for example in support of local business and new technology training, and that they had an important part to play in accelerating progress in areas crucial to inner city regeneration and in attracting private sector support. Accordingly, the Department of Employment would be extending its support for the City Action Teams. £1 million had already been allocated to one of the Teams in 1986-87 and a further £1 million would go to each of the five teams in 1987-88. [£4 million of the 1987-88 spending will be additional to expenditure plans.]

These additional resources for the expanded Inner Cities Initiative and for the City Action Teams, said Mr Clarke, demonstrated the Government's commitment to urban regeneration, and reflected its determination that people in all parts of Britain should have an opportunity to share in the growing economic success. The present initiative would ensure that it was people in Britain's inner cities who would benefit from these efforts; it was designed to help them to acquire new skills to match new opportunities, to overcome the problems they faced in setting up in business on their own account, and to make Britain's inner cities the sort of places where people would want to live and where business would want to invest.

Total government spending on tackling inner city housing dereliction and decay was over £700 million in 1986-87. About £80 million of this was spent in the eight existing task force areas. In 1987-88 about £88 million will be spent in the new task force areas [including the extra £6 million going to the task forces themselves].

Many Government programmes for tackling inner city problems are described in a booklet *Action For Cities*[1] published on 28 April.

## Shorter Note

### 'LOOK AFTER YOUR HEART' CAMPAIGN

The Department of Health and Social Security has launched the 'Look After Your Heart' campaign aimed at informing the public of the main risks of heart disease. The campaign, for which the Government will provide £2·5 million for the coming year, will be run jointly with the Health Education Authority (which has replaced the Health Education Council – see pp 397-9, 1986). It will receive a further £20,000 from the British Heart Foundation, a charity whose principal activity is research into cardiovascular disease.

Announcing the launch of the campaign on 22 April, the Secretary of State for Social Services, Mr Norman Fowler, spoke of the main factors contributing to heart disease from which some 150,000 people in England die each year. They included: smoking, an unbalanced diet, lack of exercise, high blood pressure, and stress in its various forms. Mr Fowler said that the aim of the campaign was to tell people the facts so that individuals could take the action necessary to safeguard their health and that of their family. The Government saw the campaign as 'the start of a sustained effort to reduce the unacceptably high level of premature deaths from coronary heart disease'.

Source: Department of Health and Social Security press notice, 22.4.87.

[1] *Action For Cities. Building on Initiative.* Prepared by the Department of the Environment and the Department of Employment. Available free from Department of Employment Inner Cities Initiative Central Unit, Room 513, Steel House, Tothill Street, London SW1H 9NF.

# DOCUMENTATION

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